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AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES



7/10/21

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Annette Kittredge Post
from
Mother and Glad

Christmas 1981

DAVID GARRICK
AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES



MISS ELIZABETH
BENTLEY

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES
of Great Britain and the United States

DAVID GARRICK

AND

HIS CONTEMPORARIES

EDITED BY

Brander Mathews and Laurence Hutton

New Illustrated Edition



BOSTON

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MDCCC

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

MICHAEL ANGELO, to gratify the whim of a capricious patron, carved a figure of snow, expending on this as much thought, perhaps, as upon his immortal Moses, or the imperishable dome of Saint P  ter's. The sculptor and the architect, the painter and the poet, live in their works which endure after them: the actor's work dies when he dies. He carves his image in snow. So writes Mr. Lawrence Barrett, an actor, and a student of his profession.

To fix the fleeting art,—to give expression and life to the "mute and motionless" figure which is all that Time leaves us of the great performers of the past, has been the aim of the editors of these volumes. Although many books have been written about

the stage, critical, biographical and historical, the editors believed that there was room for yet another which should differ from all its predecessors, while availing itself to the utmost of all that these predecessors might suggest. They thought that there yet remained to be written a series of histrionic biographies on a new plan, and different in scope from all attempted hitherto. Each of the earlier collections of the Lives of the Players, whatever its title, was the work of but one writer, who saw the succession of tragedians and comedians from his own point of view, personal and necessarily narrow. The editors felt that it was possible by the aid of the more modern methods of literary co-operation to prepare a broader book than any before published. They believed also that the article of the expert might be supplemented by abundant extracts from sources not generally drawn upon, especially from the periodical publications which are daily increasing in number and in importance. With the aid of all earlier works and with assistance of

contemporary newspapers and magazines, they resolved to give a threefold view of the actor, —to commingle Biography, Criticism, and Anecdote. They remembered also that most of the earlier books on the biography of the British Theatre, have been the work of English writers, who ignored, or were ignorant, of the history of the American stage, and of the light it sheds on the history of the stage in Great Britain. There is now a substantial unity between the old country and the new, and the same plays are performed by the same actors throughout the measureless domain of Greater Britain.

The editors have been greatly aided in their pleasant task by the kindness and the cordiality with which distinguished specialists in histrionic history have come forward to their aid, and for which they desire now to express their gratitude. So far as may be, the biographical sketch of every actor has been entrusted to a writer who has paid particular attention to that performer, and to the period in which he flourished, and who is therefore

prepared to present succinctly yet picturesquely the final criticism of his power as an actor, and the results of the latest research into the details of his career. To supplement these brief monographs, the editors have appended to each, a variety of extracts from all sources, from contemporary criticism, from the later biographies and memoirs, from the collections of correspondence, from the files of newspapers and magazines, and even, in a few cases, from more recent writers who have selected with skill rambling anecdotes and concisely summed up scattered criticisms. For these extracts, collected with no little labor, the editors alone are responsible; and they have spared no pains in the verification of these quotations and in the giving of exact references: as editions vary, the later from the earlier, the American from the British, the references are often to volume and chapter rather than to a particular page. They have endeavored, also, to select anecdotes characteristic of the actor's calling, to the exclusion of the merely comic

tale which might be told of the member of any profession.

In the five volumes to which the present work will extend, there will be biographical and critical sketches of about seventy-five of the leading actors and actresses who have adorned the stage of Great Britain and the United States from 1750 to 1886. The selection of the subjects of these sketches has been a task of extreme difficulty and delicacy. The list finally determined upon after consultation with leading students of the stage, is probably as comprehensive as the space at the disposal of the editors would permit. It may, and doubtless it does, exclude many performers whose claims to be admitted are strong and pressing—for this was unfortunately inevitable,—but it includes none whose title is not as good, if not better. In nothing is the personal equation larger and more important than in the estimate of histrionic gifts; and the editors can hardly hope that all their readers will be satisfied with their choice.

The volumes will follow each other in

chronological sequence. The first is devoted to David Garrick and his contemporaries. The second will consider the Kembles and the actors of their school and time. In the third and fourth, the tragedians and comedians of the middle of this century will be dealt with, grouped, — perhaps a little arbitrarily, — about Edmund Kean and Junius Brutus Booth in volume three, and about William Charles Macready and Edwin Forrest in volume four. In the fifth volume the chief performers now before the public will find place. The volumes are all independent one of another, and excepting the third and fourth, which cover almost the same time, they have each their own distinct period, and they represent a separate phase of dramatic development. Each volume will be provided with its own index.

BRANDER MATTHEWS,
LAURENCE HUTTON.

New York, March, 1886.

CHARLES MACKLIN.

1690-9—1797.

Macklin, who largely deals in half formed sounds,
Who wantonly transgresses Nature's bounds,
Whose Acting's hard, affected, and constrained,
Whose features as each other they disdained,
At variance set, inflexible and coarse,
Ne'er know the workings of united force,
Ne'er kindly soften to each other's aid,
Nor shew the mingled pow'rs of light and shade,
No longer for a thankless stage concern'd,
To worthier thoughts his mighty Genius turned,
Harangu'd, gave Lectures, made each single elf
Almost as good a speaker as himself ;
Whilst the whole town, mad with mistaken zeal,
An awkward rage of Elocution feel ;
Dull Cits and grave Divines his praise proclaim,
And join with Sheridan's their Macklin's name.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad' (*Ed.* 1763).



CHARLES MACKLIN
As Sir Pertinax McSycophant in "Man of the World."

CHARLES MACKLIN.

Charles Macklin (a more easily pronounceable contraction of McLaughlin) was born in the north of Ireland either in 1690 or in 1699. The earlier date rests on the vaguely rumored evidence of his mother and of another relation ('Mary Millar' in Kirkman, 'Ellen Byrne' in Cooke), who are said to have asserted that he was two months old when the Battle of the Boyne was fought (July 1, 1690); and further on that of a strolling player named Ware, born about 1702, who stated in his old age, that he remembered Macklin as a full-grown man when he himself was a boy. We have Macklin's own authority for the later date, though he professed himself uncertain on the point. Two explanations are given of the discrepancy by those who believe in the earlier date. One is that Macklin, when about thirty, represented himself as ten years younger in order to win the affections of a mistress. The other is that his daughter assured every one (himself included) that he was born in 1699, in order to make her own age appear less. A love of the marvelous has inclined his biographers to accept the earlier date, which would place his last performance in his hundredth year and his death in his hundred-and-eighth. It is more probable that the later date is approximately correct, and that Macklin allowed the 1690 rumor to pass

uncontradicted (he said he thought it must be mistaken) from a not uncommon willingness to be supposed a centenarian.

Accounts of his early life are vague and conflicting. It is generally agreed that he had little schooling; that, as a boy, he performed *Monimia* in the 'Orphan' (Otway); and that he was at one time a badgerman or servitor at Trinity College, Dublin. The time and manner of his migration to England are not clearly ascertained. Kirkman speaks of several hegiras all of a rather apocryphal air. It is pretty clear that he was for some years a stroller in the English provinces; and he himself used to relate some anecdotes, more scandalous than entertaining, of this part of his career. His first clearly ascertained appearance in London took place in 1730 (Dec. 4) at Lincoln's Inn Fields when he doubled the four-line parts of *Porer* and *Brazencourt* in Fielding's 'Coffee House Politician' and made a success in the latter. It is probable, however, that he had already appeared at the same theatre as *Alcander* in Dryden and Lee's 'Ædipus' about 1725. At last, in 1733, the quarrel of most of the Drury Lane company with their new manager Highmore, led to a muster of recruits from the provinces; and of these recruits Macklin was the only one who attained distinction. He appeared on Oct. 31 as *Brazen* in Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer,' and remained a member of the Drury Lane company (with short breaks in 1734 and 1744) until 1748. It was on May 10, 1735, that he had the misfortune to kill a brother actor named Hallam in the course of a quarrel about a wig. He was tried for wilful murder, but, as the case was clearly one of misadventure, he was

acquitted. Fleetwood, a man of small theatrical experience who became manager of Drury Lane in 1734, soon made Macklin his right-hand man; and it was this position of influence which enabled him, on Dec. 14, 1741, to supersede Lord Lansdowne's 'Jew of Venice' (in which *Shylock* was made a low-comedy part) by a reproduction of the 'Merchant of Venice' which the novelty of his seriously conceived *Shylock* made a remarkable success. Shortly after the advent of Garrick in 1742, Fleetwood's conduct of the theatre (both artistic and financial) became so intolerable that the company, at Garrick's suggestion, resolved to strike, it being agreed that none of them should come to terms with the management without the consent of all the rest. This impracticable condition was soon broken; and, Macklin being specially excluded by Fleetwood from the amnesty, an angry controversy ensued between him and Garrick, who was hissed off the stage on his reappearance by a Macklinite mob. The pamphlet-war shows clearly that there was right on both sides. Macklin now attempted to start a school of acting at the Haymarket, where (Feb. 6, 1744,) he played *Iago* to the *Othello* of 'a gentleman,' afterwards known as Samuel Foote. The Haymarket experiment proving unsuccessful, and Lacy having succeeded Fleetwood at Drury Lane, Macklin rejoined his old comrades, making his reappearance as *Shylock* Dec. 19, 1744. He now remained at Drury Lane until 1748, when Sheridan engaged him and his wife to go to Dublin at a joint salary of £800 a year. Having quickly quarrelled with Sheridan, he joined the Covent Garden company in 1750 and remained in it until 1753. He was the Covent Garden *Mercutio* in the

famous contest of the rival *Romeos*, Garrick and Barry. On Dec. 20, 1753, he was given a farewell benefit at Drury Lane, playing *Sir Gilbert Wrangle* in Cibber's 'Refusal' and speaking a prologue written by Garrick. His design in retiring was to establish a combined restaurant and discussion-forum in the Piazza, Covent Garden, himself officiating at once as head-waiter and as professor of the ancient and modern drama. His Four O'clock ordinary at three shillings per head was at first successful, but 'The British Inquisition,' as he called his debating-room, attracted nothing but ridicule, and the whole scheme landed him in bankruptcy. During 1757-8 he was in Dublin, superintending the erection of the Crow Street Theatre for his friend Barry. On Dec. 28, 1758, he lost his first wife (Miss Purvor, an actress of some note); and in the following year he married a second wife, who survived him. His daughter by his first marriage (b. 1748—d. 1781) was also an actress of ability. His son by his second marriage made a bad use of considerable talents and opportunities and died wretchedly in 1790. From 1759 onwards Macklin's engagements were fitful, now in London, now in Dublin, now in the English provinces and Scotland. On Dec. 12, 1759, he played *Sir Archy McSarcasm* in his own 'Love à la Mode' on its production at Drury Lane. At Covent Garden, in the autumn of 1773, he attempted the part of *Macbeth*. It was ill-received, and Macklin's assertion that two rival actors started the hissing so incensed his opponents that they would not even listen to him in his old part of *Shylock*, but by a riot (Nov. 18, 1773,) compelled Colman to dismiss him. Five of the ringleaders were afterwards prosecuted for con-

spiracy to ruin him in his profession, and being convicted, were treated by him with such generosity as to call forth a compliment from the judge, Lord Mansfield. On Nov. 11, 1776, he played *Richard III.* at Covent Garden, but did not repeat the experiment; and at the same theatre on May 10, 1781, he played *Sir Pertinax McSycophant* in his own 'Man of the World' on its first performance in London. It was at Covent Garden too that his melancholy last appearances took place, the last of all (when he broke down entirely in *Shylock*) on May 7, 1789. He died on July 11, 1797, having lived during his last years on the proceeds of a subscription edition of his two best-known plays.

The following is a list of his principal parts: *Macbeth*; *Richard III.*; *Mercutio*; *Shylock*; *Polonius*; the *First Gravedigger*, the *Ghost* and *Osric*; *Pandolph*; *Malvolio*; *Touchstone*; the *Clown* in 'All's Well'; *Stephano*; *Lucio*; *Poins*; *Fluellen*; *Sir Hugh Evans*. Ben Jonson's *Sir John Dawand Cutbeard*; *Face*; *Corvino*. Dryden's *Gomez*; *Trincalo*. Betterton's *Barnaby Rattle*. Howard's *Teague*. Rowe's *Sciolto*. Wycherley's *Jerry Blackacre*. Congreve's *Fondlewife*; *Ben*; *Sir Paul Pliant* and *Lord Froth*; *Sir Wilful Witwoud*. Vanbrugh's *Brass*; *Lord Foppington*; *Sir John Brute*. Farquhar's *Brazen*; *Old Mirabel*; *Clincher, jr.*; *Scrub*. Colley Cibber's *Sir Novelty Fashion* and *Snap*; *Sir Fopling Flutter*; *Clodio* and *Don Lewis*; *Trappanti* and *Don Manuel*; *Sir Francis Wronghead*; *Sir Gilbert Wrangle*; *Captain Strut*. Steele's *Trim*; *Humphrey Gubbin*; *Tom*. Mrs. Centlivre's *Marplot*. Gay's *Peachum*. Fielding's *Lovegold*; *Squire Brazen*; *Mock Doctor*. Macklin's *Sir Archy McSarcasm*; *Murrough O'Doherty*; *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*.

His plays are as follows: 'King Henry VII.' and 'A Will and no Will' (Drury Lane, 1746), the 'Suspicious Husband Criticized' (Drury Lane, 1747), the 'Club of Fortune-Hunters' (Drury Lane, 1748), 'Covent Garden Theatre' (Covent Garden, 1752), all more or less unsuccessful. 'Love à la Mode' (Drury Lane 1759), the 'Married Libertine' (Covent Garden, 1761), the 'True-Born Irishman' (Smock-Alley, Dublin, 1763), very successful in Ireland but a failure when reproduced (Covent Garden, 1767) under the title of the 'Irish Fine Lady,' the 'True-Born Scotchman' (Crow Street, Dublin, 1766) reproduced (Covent Garden, 1781) as the 'Man of the World.'

All accounts agree in representing Macklin as Garrick's precursor in the return to natural acting. On his first appearance in London (probably in *Alcander*, 1725), "I spoke so *familiar*, sir," said Macklin, "and so little in the *hoity-toity* tone of the tragedy of that day, that the Manager told me I had better go to grass for another year or two." "In teaching he would bid his pupils first to speak the passage as they would in common life" and then instruct them to add force but preserve the same accent. Garrick at the outset of his career owed much to his criticism, and Barry may almost be called his pupil. Whoever said of his *Shylock* "This is the Jew That Shakspeare drew" (a late tradition, of which there are several conflicting versions, attributes the remark to Pope) undoubtedly paid him a just compliment. It was a new departure in Shakspearean acting, and several descriptions of the scene with *Tubal* and the Trial Scene prove that in these passages at least it established the tradition

which has obtained until our own time. Even in matters of costume he was an innovator in the direction of historical truth. He told Pope that he played *Shylock* in a red hat because he had read that the Italian Jews wore such hats; and he dressed *Macbeth* in "the Caledonian habit." The list given above bears witness to the range of his powers. The man who could play *Osric* one night and the *Ghost* the next was certainly no single-part actor. His *Ghost*, however, was no doubt much better than his *Osric*, for "heavies" were his specialty, and *Shylock* and *Sir Pertinax* his two greatest parts. He was above the middle height, robust without corpulency, erect and athletic. His portraits (one by Opie, now in the Garrick Club, engraved as a frontispiece to the 1793 edition of his plays; one prefixed to Congreve's and another to Cooke's biography) agree in giving him dark and piercing eyes, an aquiline nose, not very large, a short upper-lip, protruding under-lip and massive jaw. His rival, Quin, saw, not "lines" but "cordage" in his face; and it was clearly best adapted for the sterner and harsher passions. "If God Almighty writes a legible hand, that man must be a villain," said Quin of his *Shylock*; and Francis Gentleman tells us that his *Iago* used to get "the indisputable, involuntary applause" of many curses. In *Peachum*, says the same critic, (one of the best of his time) "for general dryness and a just cynical turn of humor, Mr. Macklin stood foremost," whereas his "Saturnine cast of countenance, sententious utterance, hollow-toned voice and heaviness of deportment, ill suited the whimsical *Mercutio*." Even in parts not really within his range Macklin's intelligence made him respectable. Of his *Touchstone* Gentleman

says, "he marked the meaning of this character very strongly, but wanted volubility," while Cooke, though describing his *Macbeth* as "like a Scotch Piper" in appearance, states that "many of the scenes were given with such a knowledge of the character as to redeem the first impression." His *Pandulph*, a character which should have suited him, Quin described as "a cardinal who had originally been a parish clerk;" but Quin, the champion of the old school, had come to words (and blows) with him too often to be an impartial critic. It may not convey an altogether false impression to call Macklin the Phelps of last century.

Energy and honesty were the dominant traits of his character. Entirely self-educated, he yet used his alert intelligence so well as to become, after Garrick, the most cultured actor of his time; though when he attempted to lecture on the theatre of the Greeks and the origins of the Shakspearean drama he was doubtless beyond his depth. He wrote with vigor and propriety, though in controversy he carried to extremes the italicized emphasis then in vogue. In his letters to his scapegrace son he appears as an affectionate father and a man of much practical sense. It is in one of them that the remark occurs, "A Scotchman never lives for a moment *extempore*." In money-matters, though far from provident, he was punctiliously honest and sometimes remarkably generous. His temper was hasty but not vindictive. As a stage-manager (or "drill-sergeant") he had the reputation of a martinet. When Lee Lewes excused his gagging in 'Love à la Mode' by saying "'Tis only a little of my nonsense." "Aye," replied Macklin, "but I think *my* nonsense is rather better than yours; so keep to

that if you please, sir." In his younger days, however, when he played *Jerry Blackacre* to Quin's *Manly*, Quin accused him of clowning, alleging that "there was no having a chaste scene for him." His wit was a product of sturdy sense rather than of quick fantasy, and his two surviving comedies are merely adroit actor's-plays. In conversation he was copious and rather overbearing—like Johnson, says one of his biographers, if his pistol missed fire he would knock you down with the butt-end. He was, in short, a restless, eager and rather turbulent spirit, yet of a sterling quality, both as an actor and a man, which cannot but command our respect.

Both on the mimic and the real stage he lagged too long. On the night of his last appearance, he entered the Covent Garden green-room and coming up to Mrs. Pope, said, "My dear, are you to play to-night?" "Good God! to be sure I am, sir. Why, don't you see I am dressed for *Portia*." "Ah! very true; I had forgot.—But who is to play *Shylock*?" "Why you, to be sure. Are not you dressed for the part?" He then seemed to recollect himself, and putting his hand to his forehead exclaimed, "God help me, my memory, I am afraid has left me." He struggled painfully through the opening scenes of the part and then gave up the battle. After this he used habitually to attend the theatre, where the pit, knowing him, made way for him and treated him with respect; but he seldom understood anything of the play. He acted out the Seventh Age to its bitter end and for years before his death was little more than a driveller and a show.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

The character of *Macbeth* had been hitherto performed in the attire of an English general ; but Macklin was the first who performed it in the old Scottish garb. His appearance was previously announced by the Coldstream March, which I then thought the most delightful music I had ever heard ; and I never hear it now without most pleasing recollections. When Macklin appeared on the bridge, he was received with shouts of applause, which were repeated throughout his performance. I was seated in the pit, and so near the orchestra, that I had a full opportunity of seeing him to advantage. Garrick's representation of the character was before my time : Macklin's was certainly not marked by studied grace of deportment ; but he seemed to be more in earnest in the character than any actor I have subsequently seen.

JOHN TAYLOR : 'Records of My Life,' vol. ii., chap. 2.

The performance that I was most impressed with was Macklin's *Shylock*. I consider it to have been a *chef d'œuvre*, that must be classed with the *Lear* of Garrick, the *Falstaff* of Henderson, the *Sir Pertinax* of Cooke, and the *Coriolanus* of John Kemble. I have seen many actors (and one in modern times) who surpassed him in passages ; but none that sustained the character throughout, and presented on the whole such a bold and original portrait of the Jew. His success however, is generally referred to his having been the original on its revival,—this is partly true ; but in any age he must have produced the same effect ; for he possessed by nature certain physical advantages which qualified him to embody *Shylock*, and which combined with his peculiar genius, constituted a performance

which was never imitated in his own day, and cannot be described in this.

JOHN BERNARD: 'Retrospections of the Stage,' *vol. i., chap. 4.*

Macklin, whose personation of *Shylock* to its true reading had elicited the impromptu of Pope, "This is the Jew that Shakspeare drew," was my father's theatrical oracle. His portrait hung over the fireplace in our little dining-room, with the inscription "Charles Macklin, aged 98." In some of his visits to Dublin he had instructed my father in the part of *Egerton* in his comedy of the 'Man of the World;' and on the occasion of his last benefit there he sent for his pupil from Waterford (where my father was playing) to act *Egerton*.

It was said of him that at nineteen he could not read. It is however certain that he was servant, similar to what at Oxford is called a Scout, at Trinity College, Dublin. The custom was for these servants to wait in the courts of the college in attendance on the calls of the students. To every shout of "Boy!" the Scout, first in turn, replied, "What number?" and its announcement went up to the room denoted, for his orders. After Macklin by his persevering industry had gained a name as author and actor, in one of his engagements at the Dublin Theatre some unruly young men caused a disturbance, when Macklin in very proper terms rebuked them for their indecent behavior. The audience applauded; but one of the rioters, thinking to put him down by reference to his early low condition, with contemptuous bitterness shouted out "Boy!" Poor Macklin for a moment lost

his presence of mind, but recollecting himself, modestly stepped forward, and with manly complacency responded, "What number?" It is unnecessary to add that the plaudits of the house fully avenged him on the brutality of his insulters.

His manner was generally harsh, as indeed was his countenance. . . . My father has described to me his mode of speaking to the players at rehearsal. There was good advice, though conveyed in his gruff voice and imperious tone. "Look at me, sir, look at me! Keep your eye fixed on me when I am speaking to you! Attention is always fixed; if you take your eye from me you rob the audience of my effects, and you rob me of their applause!"—a precept I never forgot, and to which I have been much indebted.

After he had left the stage, which the utter loss of memory compelled him to do, my father paid him a visit in London, and his account of it gave curious evidence of an inveterate prejudice surviving the decay of physical and intellectual power. The old man, with lack-lustre eye, was sitting in his arm-chair unconscious of any one being present, till Mrs. Macklin addressed him. "My dear, here is Mr. Macready come to see you." "Who?" said Macklin. "Mr. Macready, my dear." "Ha! who is he?" "Mr. Macready, you know, who went to Dublin to act for your benefit." "Ha! my benefit? what was it? what did he act?" "I acted *Egerton*, sir," said my father, "in your own play." "Ha! my play? what was it?" "The 'Man of the World,' sir." "Ha, 'Man of the World!' Devilish good title! Who wrote it?" "You did, sir." "Did I? Well! What was it about?" "Why, sir, there was a Scotchman"—"Ah d——n them!" My father

finding it useless to prolong this last interview with his old preceptor, took his leave.

W. C. MACREADY: 'Reminiscences,' chap. 2, 1808-11.

I saw Macklin perform *Iago* and *Sir Paul Pliant*, and other characters. In *Iago*, though doubtless he was correct in his conception of the character, he was coarse and clumsy in his deportment, and nothing could be more rough than his manner of stabbing *Emilia*, and running from the stage, in the last scene. His *Sir Paul* was not wanting in noisy humor, but was rude in action. He was too theoretical for nature. He had three pauses in his acting—the first, moderate; the second, twice as long; but his last, or "grand pause," as he styled it, was so long, that the prompter, on one occasion, thinking his memory failed, repeated the cue, as it is technically called, several times, and at last so loud, as to be heard by the audience. At length Macklin rushed from the stage, and knocked him down, exclaiming, "The fellow interrupted me in my grand pause."

The last time I ever saw Macklin was in Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, during a very severe frost, when the snow had hardened on the ground. He was well muffled up in a great-coat, and walked to and fro with great vigor. I addressed him, and said, "Well, Mr. Macklin, I suppose you are comparing the merits of former actors with those of the present day." "The what of the present day?" said he in a very loud tone; "the what, sir?" in a louder tone, "the actors, sir?" He repeated his question with a voice that made the whole street ring. "Perhaps, sir," said I, "you will not allow the present race to be actors." "Good-morning,

sir," said he, and abruptly parted from me, resuming his walk with extraordinary strength and speed.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of My Life,' vol. ii., chap. 2.

Macklin, whose skill in acting is acknowledged to be superior to that of any other man, who is the best teacher of the art, and is still, at a very advanced age a powerful comedian, as well as a good comic writer, should have refused this part [*Pandulph*]; neither his person, voice, action, or deportment, conveyed any idea of a great delegate from the head of the church, or the spiritual monarch of Christendom. Quin, who was present at the revival of *King John* at Drury Lane, said Macklin was like a cardinal who had been formerly a parish clerk. And yet, it must be owned Macklin understood the logic of the part, if I may be allowed the expression, better than anybody. But the man, who presumes to control the will of mighty monarchs, should have a person which bespeaks authority, a look commanding respect, graceful action, and majestic deportment.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Miscellanies,' vol. i., chap. 4.

In Macklin's garden there were three long parallel walks, and his method of exercising their voices was thus: his two young pupils with back boards (such as they use in boarding schools) walked firmly, slow, and well up and down the two side walks; Macklin himself paraded the centre walk: at the end of every twelve paces he made them stop; and turning gracefully, the young actor called out across the walk, "How do you do, Miss Ambrose?"—she answered, "Very well,

I thank you, Mr. Glenville." They then took a few more paces, and the next question was, "Do you not think it a very fine day, Mr. Glenville?" "A very fine day, indeed, Miss Ambrose," was the answer. Their walk continued; and then, "How do you do, Mr. Glenville?"—"Pretty well, I thank you, Miss Ambrose." And this exercise continued for an hour or so (Macklin still keeping in the centre walk), in the full hearing of their religious next-door neighbors. Such was Macklin's method of training the management of the voice: if too high, too low, a wrong accent, or a faulty inflection, he immediately noticed it, and made them repeat the words twenty times till all was right. Soon after this Mr. Glenville played *Antonio* to his *Shylock* in the 'Merchant of Venice'; and Miss Ambrose *Charlotte* in his own 'Love à la Mode.'

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. i., chap. 7.

At this time the aspirant [Charles Mathews] sought an interview with the celebrated Charles Macklin, who had then attained a hundred years and upwards. He had been recommended to recite to him for the purpose of gaining the veteran's opinion and instructions; and going by appointment to the residence of the aged man in Tavistock-row, he found him ready to receive him. When the door was opened and the youth announced, there was Macklin in his arm-chair, from which he did not attempt to rise, nor, indeed, take any notice of the entrance of the stranger, but remained with an arm on either elbow of the chair he sat in, looking sour and severe at his expected pupil, who, hesitating on the threshold, paused timidly, nay, fearfully, which occasioned the centenary to call out in any

but inviting tones, "Come *nearer!* What do you stand *there* for? You can't act in the gap of the door." The young man approached. "Well," added Macklin, in a voice ill-calculated to inspire confidence, "Don't be *afraid!* Now let me hear you." This crabbed austerity completely chilled the aspirant's ardor; however, mustering up all the confidence this harsh reception had left him, he began to declaim according to the approved rule of "speech-days." Macklin, sitting like a stern judge waiting to pronounce sentence on a criminal, rather than to laud a hero, soon interrupted the speech with a mock imitation of the novice's monotonous tones, barking out, "Bow, wow, wow, wow!"

MRS. MATHEWS: 'Memoir of Charles Mathews,'
vol. i., chap. 4.

During this century, the public had not seen a proper outline of *Iago* till Charles Macklin exhibited a faithful picture of this arch-villain, in 1744, in the Haymarket Theatre, when Foote was his *Othello*. It is to Macklin we chiefly owe the many admirable strokes of passion with which Barry surprised us in *Othello*. Let this not be understood to mean the least degradation of that great actor's abilities; for, if Barry had not possessed a soul capable of receiving the instructions of so great a master, he could not have so pathetically affected an audience. Macklin himself will honestly tell us, that he owed no small part of his knowledge in acting to the lessons he gained from Mr. Chetwood, prompter of Drury Lane Theatre.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Dramatic Miscellanies,' *vol. iii., chap. 7.*

Macklin was himself a singular character; he was rough and blunt to an extreme degree in his language and manner; he was haughty and independent in spirit, and very irritable in temper, his violence of disposition often leading him to brutality. Yet with all this he was one of the kindest of men, a warm friend and a devoted husband and father. The occurrence which placed him in the dock of a court of justice happened before he had reached the zenith of his fame, which he did not do until his success as *Shylock* in 1741. Charles Macklin was tried at the old Bailey on May 10, 1735. The indictment was for the murder of Thomas Hallam, by thrusting a stick into his left eye, and thereby giving him one mortal wound, of which wound he languished until the next day and then he died. The jury found the prisoner guilty of manslaughter, and the result of this conviction, which made the offence a felony, with the benefit of clergy, was according to the ridiculous practice of that day, that Macklin was burnt in the hand and discharged. Hallam, the victim of Macklin's irritable temper, was a performer of little merit, and during the dull period of the dramatic season set up a theatrical booth in Bartholomew Fair, where, on one occasion was played the 'Comical Humors of Squire Softhead and his man Bullcalf, and the Whimsical Distresses of Mother Catterwall.' The fatal result arising from this quarrel with Hallam, did not suppress the irritability of his disposition, although in the instance we are about to relate he seems not to have been so reprehensible as in the former case. During the run of Wycherley's 'Plain Dealer,' the person who was to perform *Jerry Blackacre*, being suddenly taken ill, to prevent a disappointment

on the part of the audience, Macklin was applied to, and readily undertook the character. Some difference now arose between him and Quin upon the propriety of wearing *red* breeches in the part. Quin rudely accosted Macklin. Macklin remonstrated with him, when Quin threw an orange in his face. A violent scuffle ensued, in which Macklin was the victor, and his antagonist in consequence of the beating he received was for some time confined to his bed.

PETER BURKE, in '*Era Almanack*,' 1870, p. 68.

Macklin, whose writing was as harsh and as hard as his conduct was rude and dogmatic, who, though he did not produce many pieces, contrived to make one answer the purpose of many, whose strange peculiarities made him a torment to himself and to everybody else, was, however, a useful, and sometimes a great actor, and very far from an inferior author.

CHARLES DIBDIN: '*History of the Stage*,' *Book ix.*, chap. 7.

He had no respect for the modesty of youth or sex, but would say the most discouraging, as well as grossest things; and felt pleasure in proportion to the pain he gave. It was common with him to ask his pupils, why they did not rather think of becoming bricklayers than players. He was impatient of contradiction to an extreme; and when he found fault, if the person attempted to answer, he stopped him without hearing, by saying, "Ha, you have always a reason for being in the wrong!" This impatience carried him still farther; it often rendered him exceedingly abusive. He could pronounce the words, *scoundrel*, *fool*, *blockhead*,

familiarly, without the least annoyance to his nervous system. He indeed pretended to the strictest impartiality, and while his passions were unconcerned, often preserved it; but these were so extremely irritable, that the least opposition was construed into an unpardonable insult; and the want of immediate apprehension in his pupils subjected them to the most galling contempt, which excited despair instead of emulation. His authority was too severe a climate for the tender plant of genius ever to thrive in. His judgment was, however, in general sound, and his instructions those of a master.

THOMAS HOLCROFT: 'Memoirs,' vol. i., Book ii., chap. i.

Everybody, I presume, must have had some information respecting Macklin's person and manners; that he was a broad-breasted, ball-headed, shaggy-browed, hooked-nosed individual, as rough and husky as a cocoa-nut, with a barking or grunting delivery more peculiar than pleasing, which to musical ears made him something like a bore. . . . If good manners are to be gleaned from a collision with society, Macklin's were bad, because throughout life he had been chiefly his own company. His manners grew out of his mind, which being powerful and profound, cared not for oil or ornament, so long as it could express itself with vigor and conciseness. . . . The terrific effect of his features, when under excitation, has been recorded in his performance of *Shylock*. The most amusing proof I have heard upon the point was as follows:—

When he had established his fame in that character, George the Second went to see him; and the

impression he received was so powerful that it deprived him of rest throughout the night. In the morning the premier (Sir Robert Walpole) waited on the king, to express his fears that the Commons would oppose a certain measure then in contemplation. "I wish Your Majesty," said Sir Robert, "it was possible to find a receipt for frightening a House of Commons!" "What do you think," replied the King, "of sending them to the theatre to see that Irishman play *Shylock*!"

JOHN BERNARD: 'Retrospections of the Stage,' vol. ii., chap. 4.

His conversation among young people was perfectly moral and always tended to make us better: he was, in my opinion as to intellect, a very shining character, and in all instances I knew him to be a worthy man; but a great sitter-up at nights for sake of conversation: many a morning sun has peeped into our convivial parties; he was then between seventy and eighty. From the loss of his teeth his nose and chin were prominent: he took no snuff, and hated swearing, or broad vulgar jests in conversation, though smitten much with repartee.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. ii., chap. 4.

Rude he was, but generally witty with it. Once at a dinner party, being rather the worse (or better) for wine, he suddenly turned and violently clapped an Irish clergyman on the back. "Now, sir," he cried, "what is your opinion of Terence's plays?" The clergyman, half confounded by the blow, and the vehemence with which the question had been put, answered, in a rich brogue, "What! do you mean his

Latin edition?" "Do you think," replied Macklin, giving him another hearty blow, "do you think I meant his *Irish* edition? and be d—— to you!"

Macklin was particularly proud of this play. Once a country manager produced it at his theatre, upon which, says O'Keefe, Macklin wrote him word that if he did not withdraw it, "he would send him sheets of parchment that would reach from Chancery Lane to the next gooseberry-bush the nearest verge of Yorkshire, to John O'Groat's house. The manager's answer to Macklin ran thus:—"Your 'Love à la Mode,' sir! I'm not going to play *your* 'Love à la Mode.' I'll play my *own* 'Love à la Mode.' I have twenty 'Love à la Modes.' I could write a 'Love à la Mode' every day in the week. I could write three hundred and sixty-six 'Love à la Modes' in a year!"—

W. CLARK RUSSELL: 'Representative Actors,' p. 68, *foot note*.

Macklin's devotion to the stage continued long after he had quitted it. He was, of course, indulged by the late Mr. Harris with the freedom of the theatre, when he frequently took his station in the first row of the pit; and if an actor's voice did not reach him, he was sure to get up, and in a commanding tone say: "Speak louder, sir, I cannot hear you." The actors, in general, tolerated his peculiarities, and he lived upon good terms with them.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of my Life,' vol. ii., chap. 2.

Macklin's last attempt on the stage was *Shylock*: he came ready dressed for the character into the green-room, where all the performers were assembled and

prepared: looking round, he said, "What, is there a play to-night?" All were astonished, and no one answered. He repeated, "Is there a play to-night?" *Portia* remarked: "Why, sir, what is the matter? The 'Merchant of Venice,' you know." "And who is the *Shylock*?" asked Macklin. "Why, you, sir, you are the *Shylock*." "Ah!" said he, "am I?" and sat down in silence. Every one was much concerned and alarmed; however, the curtain went up, the play began, and he got through the part with every now and then going to the side of the stage, lifting up his hairs with one hand, and putting his ear down to the prompter, who gave him the word; he then walked to the centre of the stage and repeated the words tolerably well: this occurred often through the play, but sometimes he said to the prompter, "Eh, what is it? what do you say?" The play was got through, and from that night Macklin's great talents were lost to the public. For some time before his death, he never went into a bed, but slept in an elbow chair. He died at his house in Covent Garden, the right-hand corner of Tavistock Court.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. ii., chap. 6.

Dark was his col'ring, but conception strong;
 If hard his manner, still it ne'er was wrong
 Warm'd with the poet, to the part he rose,
 His anger fir'd us, and his terror froze;
 And more; where quaintness shut out meaning's day,
 Macklin threw light with fine discernment's ray:
 If these are truths, which envy's self must breathe,
 Applause should crown him with her greenest wreath.
 'The Drama,' a Poem (1775).

JAMES QUIN.

1693—1766.

Here whilom ligg'd the Æsopus of the age ;
But call'd by fame, in soul y-pricked deep,
A nobler pride restored him to the stage,
And roused him like a giant from his sleep,
Even from his slumbers we advantage reap :
With double force the enlivened scene he wakes,
Yet quits not nature's bounds. He knows to keep
Each due decorum : now the heart he shakes,
And now with well-urged sense the enlighten'd judgment takes.

JAMES THOMSON : the 'Castle of Indolence,' *canto i.*,
stanza 67.



JAMES QUINN.

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JAMES QUIN.

With the coming of Garrick came the death of the School of Betterton. The mantle of that grand actor may be said to have fallen on Barton Booth, and at his decease it descended to Quin, who wore it worthily, and fought bravely for his old faith against the innovations of the "Whitfield of the Stage;" but went down in the inevitable victory of Nature over Tradition.

James Quin, the descendant of an old Irish family, was born in King Street, Covent Garden, on Feb. 24, 1693. His grandfather, Mark Quin, was Lord Mayor of Dublin, and his father was a member of Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the English Bar; but, on succeeding to the family estate, he left England and settled in his native country. He died in 1710, and, in 1714, his son, James Quin, appeared as an actor. There are contradictory stories explaining why the son of an independent gentleman should have had to earn his living on the stage. At this distance of time we are hardly in a position to decide whether his father's extravagance dissipated the estate, or a Chancery Suit disposed of it in a less agreeable manner; whether Quin lost his property through the injudicious reappearance

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of a supposed-defunct former husband of his mother's, who had the bad taste to assert his existence and thus make Quin illegitimate; or whether, having inherited his property, he wasted it in riotous living. As Chetwood gives his adhesion to the Chancery Suit, that may be accepted as the most likely explanation.

Quin made his first appearance on any stage at the old Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, in the part of *Abel* in the 'Committee;' and during the season played small parts, of which we have record of *Cleon* in Shadwell's adaptation of 'Timon of Athens,' and the *Prince of Tanais* in Rowe's 'Tamerlane.' Chetwood tells us that he saw the young player's genius, and advised him not to waste his time in Ireland, but to try his fortune in London. He took Chetwood's advice, and engaged at Drury Lane, where his first recorded character was *Vultur*, in Charles Johnson's 'Country Lasses,' Feb. 4, 1715. He played small parts till the next season, when accident furnished him with an opportunity; Nov. 5, 1716, a grand revival of 'Tamerlane' took place, in which Quin probably played the small but important part of the *Dervise*. On the third night of its run Mills, who played *Bajazet*, was suddenly taken ill, and Quin was persuaded to go on and read the part. He was received with so much applause that he made himself perfect in the words before the next night, and earned increased approbation. But with Booth, Wilks, and Mills in the company, there was no opening for an ambitious young player; and, as Lincoln's Inn Fields was very weak in first-rate actors, Quin transferred his services to John Rich. Under this manager he stepped at once into leading business, making his first appearance on

Jan. 7, 1718, as *Hotspur*; and with Rich he remained as principal actor till 1734. In 1720-1 his reputation was materially enhanced by his performance of *Sir John Falstaff*, in the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' which he played no fewer than eighteen times during the season.

In 1718, Quin was unfortunate enough to cause the death of a brother-actor, William Bowen; but the evidence given at the trial clearly showing that Quin had only acted in self-defense, he was acquitted. On another occasion Quin had to take his trial for murder. A Welsh actor, named Williams, played *Decius* one night to Quin's *Cato*, and the latter, having very unjustifiably ridiculed on the stage the Welshman's pronunciation of "Cato," was attacked by him and, in defending himself, slew him. For this offence he was also acquitted.

During the life of Booth, Quin was the support of the company with which Rich opposed the powerful forces of Drury Lane; and, from the time of Booth's retirement—Jan. 9, 1728—until Garrick's triumphal entry in 1741, he was the acknowledged chief of his profession. His sovereignty was only threatened by Delane, from Dublin, who appeared at Goodman's Fields in November, 1731, and whose abilities, aided by his youth and good looks, made him a temporary rival for the dramatic throne. When Rich opened the new theatre in Covent Garden, Quin played *Fainall*, in Congreve's 'Way of the World,' on the opening night, Dec. 7, 1732. Nothing more strongly confirmed Quin's supremacy than his success in Booth's great part of *Cato*. During Booth's life he did not venture to play it, but on Jan. 18, 1734, he acted it with triumphant success. He modestly announced

that the part of *Cato* would be "attempted" by Mr. Quin : but so satisfactory was his performance that it is said that, after the utterance of the line,

Thanks to the gods, my boy has done his duty !

there was a universal shout of "Booth out-done !" It is also said that the audience insisted on a repetition of the famous soliloquy. When Fleetwood became patentee of Drury Lane, he did all in his power to collect a strong company, and offered Quin £500 a year, a salary previously unheard of in an English theatre, to join his forces. Quin was receiving only £300 from Rich, but he was loath to desert his old chief, and offered to remain for a smaller salary than that offered by Fleetwood. But Rich considered that no actor was worth more than £300 a year, so Quin migrated to Drury Lane, where he appeared on Sept. 10, 1734, as *Othello*. He continued there till the end of the season 1740-1, when he went to Ireland as a star, appearing at the theatre in Aungier Street in June, 1741, and continuing there for two seasons, returning to London in 1742.

During his absence David Garrick had appeared, and the revolution which shook Quin from his throne had commenced. That it was a fight to the death between the old school and the new was at once recognized by the older actor, who declared that "If the young fellow is right, I and the rest of the players have been all wrong." Who was right and who was wrong, Quin had no doubt, and he said, when he saw Garrick's extraordinary popularity, that "Garrick was a new religion ; Whitfield was followed for a time ; but they would all come to church again." To this Garrick replied in the well known epigram :—

Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy infects the town ;
That Whitfield-Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the sound religion of the stage :
Schism, he cries, has turn'd the nation's brain ;
But eyes will open, and to church again !
Thou great infallible, forbear to roar,
Thy bulls and errors are rever'd no more ;
When doctrines meet with gen'ral approbation,
It is not heresy, but reformation.

Against the powerful attraction of Garrick, who was at Drury Lane in 1742-3, and the two following seasons, Rich opposed Quin, but with no great success. In 1745-6 Garrick was in Ireland, and Quin did not act ; but on the return of the former, Rich succeeded in engaging him to play at Covent Garden, and, as Quin was also engaged, the rivals confronted each other on the same stage. During the first weeks of the season, 1746-7, each played a selection of favorite parts ; and, on Nov. 14, 1746, they met for the first time in the same play, Rowe's 'Fair Penitent,' Quin acting *Horatio*, and Garrick *Lothario*. The interest excited by this conjunction was enormous, and, when the rivals met on the stage in the second act, the applause was so vehement and prolonged that both were visibly disconcerted. In this play, no great advantage was gained by either ; but, in 'Henry IV., Part I.,' Quin's *Falstaff* was immeasurably superior to Garrick's *Hotspur*. In Rowe's 'Jane Shore,' the only other play in which they appeared together, Garrick, who had a good part, *Hastings*, had the advantage of Quin, whose part, *Gloster*, is a wretched one. On the whole, though the older actor was incontestably superior in *Cato*, *Bajazet*, *Othello*, *Falstaff*, and some other

parts, the popular verdict was distinctly in Garrick's favor; and Quin retired in disgust to Bath. Next season, Garrick was patentee of Drury Lane, and Quin, rousing himself for the fray, intimated to Rich his wish to enlist under his banner, in the often-quoted laconic epistle :—

I am at Bath.

Yours,

JAMES QUIN.

To which Rich replied :—

Stay there and be damned.

Yours,

JOHN RICH.

But, towards the end of the season, Quin once more headed the forces of Covent Garden, where he continued till his retirement from the stage, although Garrick tried to tempt him over to Drury Lane, after Barry's secession in 1750. Quin, however, remained with Rich; though not without stipulating that his salary should be £1,000 a year, the greatest amount ever paid up to that time. During this season (1750-1) it must have become painfully obvious to the veteran that his time was past; he made no head against Garrick; so popular was the young actor as *Richard* that Quin was hissed one night when he played it. In his own theatre Barry was a successful rival; and, on Quin's benefit night, the thin attendance of the public forced on him the terrible conviction that he was no longer a popular actor. With that dignity which always characterized him, he withdrew from the strife without fuss or formal farewell, making his last appearance as an engaged actor, in the part of *Horatio* in

the 'Fair Penitent,' on May 15, 1751. He retired to Bath, only emerging from his rest twice (on March 16, 1752, and March 19, 1753,) to play *Falstaff* for the benefit of his old friend, Ryan. The latter of these occasions was his last appearance on the stage. In the following year Ryan asked the same favor, but Quin, having lost two front teeth, which injured his speaking, is said to have replied :—

My dear Friend—There is no person on earth whom I wou'd sooner serve than Ryan—but, by G-d, I will whistle *Falstaff* for no man.

It is added that he did not allow his old friend to suffer pecuniarily by his inability to play for him. It is pleasant to know that Garrick and Quin, who while rivals had always treated each other with respect, were warm friends during Quin's last years. Indeed it was while the latter was on a visit to Hampton that he was attacked by his last illness. An eruption appeared on his hand, which the doctors feared might turn to a mortification ;—this preyed on his mind so much that he worried himself into a fever which carried him off. The day before his death, he said he could wish that the last tragic scene were over, though he was in hopes that he should be able to go through it with becoming dignity. He died in his own house at Bath on Jan. 21, 1766, and was buried in the Abbey Church there. On the monument erected to his memory is engraved the epitaph written by Garrick :—

That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charm'd the public ear is heard no more !
Clos'd are those eyes, the harbingers of wit,
Which spake before the tongue what Shakspeare writ:
Cold is that hand, which, living, was stretch'd forth
At Friendship's call, to succour modest worth.

I.—3

Here lies James Quin.—Deign, reader, to be taught,
Whate'er thy strength of body, force of thought ;
In Nature's happiest mould, however cast,
To this complexion thou must come at last.

In person, Quin was above the middle height, of athletic build, and majestic presence. His face was handsome, and full of expression ; and his voice strong and melodious. It was of so good quality, and he sang so well, that Gay offered him the part of *Macheath*, in the 'Beggar's Opera': but, after rehearsing a few times, he resigned it because he felt that he could not throw into it the requisite dash and gaiety. His deportment was never distinguished for delicacy or grace, but it was eminently dignified and weighty. In tragedy he was most successful in that class of characters which may be described as stoical. For parts where passion and fire were required, and where quickly changing emotions demanded vivid feeling and versatile expression, he was by no means qualified. Declamation was his stronghold, and, though he assuredly used the affected "tone" of the old school, he was an admirable elocutionist. Thus, his *Ghost* in 'Hamlet,' and his *Comus*, were perfect ; and his *Duke* in 'Measure for Measure' so good that Booth, after seeing him play it, would not undertake the character, declaring that he would never, if he could avoid it, hazard a comparison between himself and Quin. His limitations in tragic qualities will make it intelligible that he should fail in *Lear*, *Richard*, and *Macbeth*, and succeed in *Cato*, *Brutus*, *Pyrrhus* ('Distressed Mother'), *Pierre* ('Venice Preserved'), *Horatio* ('Fair Penitent'), *Ventidius* ('All for Love'), *Tamermene* and *Bajazet*.

In comedy, his greatest achievement was in the

most difficult part ever written : a part which has been satisfactorily played by not more than three actors since the Restoration : a part now lost to the stage—*Sir John Falstaff*. His comic acting was distinguished by rich and natural humor, free from all extravagance or forcing. It was always spirited and vigorous, but restrained by excellent judgment. He had great command of facial expression, and was most happy in the business with which he filled in the outlines of a character ; but he descended neither to grimace nor buffoonery. He was naturally a man of strong good sense, as well as wit and humor, and his acting had consequently that back-bone which no mere theatrical ability or technical expertness can give. It must also be remembered that his admirable elocution enabled him to deliver witty dialogue with perfect point, and delicate observance of every shade of meaning. His greatest parts in comedy were—*Falstaff*, *Henry VIII.*, *Jacques*, *Thersites*, *Apemantus*, *Volpone*, *Manly* ('Plain Dealer'), *Heartwell* ('Old Bachelor'), *Sir John Brute* ('Provoked Wife'), *Maskwell* ('Double Dealer'), *Dominic* ('Spanish Friar'), *Sullen* ('Stratagem'), *Balance* ('Recruiting Officer'), *Old Knowell* ('Every Man in his Humor'), and *Æsop*. He was profoundly contemptuous of the aids of make-up and costume, and seems to have dressed most of his characters very badly. It is recorded, for instance, that he played the sprightly *Young Bevil*, in Steele's 'Conscious Lovers,' in the suit which he wore as the *Old Bachelor*.

In his private character, Quin commands our admiration and respect for his honesty, straightforwardness, and benevolence ; and even his failings, such as

his love of good feeding, were not unamiable. He was hot-tempered and sharp-tongued, but he was a true friend to all who needed aid and counsel, and his purse was always at the command of the poor and deserving. Of his numerous benefactions it will be sufficient to allude to his kindness to Thomson, who, in gratitude, has immortalized him in a fine passage in the 'Castle of Indolence.' Quin was the most noted wit of his day, and a collection of jests, purporting to be his, is published: but this use of his name was a mere catch-penny trick to make the book sell. A Life of Quin was published in 1766, but it is a wretchedly incorrect and stupid compilation.

ROBERT W. LOWE.

I have the spectacle even now as it were before my eyes. Quin presented himself, upon the rising of the curtain, in a green velvet coat embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottom periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes. With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep, full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than of the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference that seemed to disdain the plaudits that were bestowed upon him.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND: 'Memoirs,' *vol. i.*, p. 80.

Quin's was the grandiloquent or artificial style. He exhibited the form rather than the soul of tragedy. Parts of dignity and lofty pride became him, such as

Coriolanus or *Cato* ; but he did not excel in representing the ebb and flow of the passions—the lights, and shadows, and conflicting elements, which go to make up the sum of the human character. He wore the cothurnus rather than the buskin ; and appeared dressed in the fetters rather than the ornaments of the Muse. Nevertheless, he reigned till the year 1741, when a more potent spirit arose, and he was suddenly and forever displaced by Garrick.

BARRY CORNWALL : ‘ *Life of Kean,*’ *introduction*.

The several actors of *King John* in this scene had their different and appropriated shares of merit. Quin’s voice and manner of acting were well adapted to the situation and business of it. His solemn and articulate whisperings were like soft notes of music, which summon our deepest attention ; but, whether the action did not correspond with the words, or the look did not assist the speech and action, the effect was not perfectly produced.

THOMAS DAVIES : ‘ *Miscellanies,*’ *vol. i., chap. 4*.

He who understood propriety in speaking better than any other actor of the time, was Quin. But though this comedian was a very natural reciter of plain and familiar dialogue, he was utterly unqualified for the striking and vigorous characters of tragedy ; could neither express the tender nor violent emotions of the heart ; his action was generally forced or languid, and his movement ponderous and sluggish. But it must be confessed that he often gave true weight and dignity to sentiment, by a well regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution, and easy

deportment. His *Brutus* and *Cato* will be remembered with pleasure by the surviving spectators of them, when their candor would wish to forget his *Lear* and *Richard*.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. i., chap. 3.*

The great applause Quin gained in this the feeblest portrait of *Falstaff* encouraged him to venture on the most high-seasoned part of the character in the 'First Part of Henry IV.' Of this large compound of his, bragging and exhaustless fund of wit and humor, Quin possessed the ostensible or mechanical part in an eminent degree. In person he was tall and bulky; his voice strong and pleasing; his countenance manly, and his eyes piercing and expressive. In scenes where satire and sarcasm were poignant, he greatly excelled; particularly in the Witty Triumph over *Bardolph's* carbuncles, and the fooleries of the hostess. His supercilious brow, in spite of assumed gaiety, sometimes unmasked the surliness of his disposition; however, he was, notwithstanding some faults, esteemed the most intelligent and judicious *Falstaff* since the days of Betterton.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Dramatic Miscellanies,' *vol. i., chap. 12.*

His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the sullen habit of his soul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,
Too proud for Tenderness, too dull for Rage.
When *Hector's* lovely widow shines in tears,
Or Rowe's gay Rake dependant Virtue jeers,

With the same cast of features he is seen,
 To chide the Libertine and court the Queen.
 From the tame scene, which without passion flows,
 With just desert his reputation rose.
 Nor less he pleas'd, when, on some surly plan,
 He was, at once, the Actor and the Man.
 In *Brute* he shone unequall'd ; all agree
 Garrick's not half so great a Brute as he.
 When *Cato's* labor'd scenes are brought to view,
 With equal praise the Actor labor'd too,
 For still you'll find, trace passions to their root,
 Small diff'rence 'twixt the Stoic and the Brute.
 In fancied scenes, as in life's real plan,
 He could not, for a moment, find the Man.
 In whate'er cast his character was laid,
 Self still, like oil upon the surface play'd.
 Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in ;
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still was Quin.
 CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad' (*Ed.* 1763).

Macklin and he were never very friendly ; they were cast too much in the same mould, equally rough and masculine in frame, and in intellect they were alike opinionated and sarcastical : whilst their difference consisted in habits and desires which led them to entertain a contempt for each other. Quin loved good living and to rub shoulders with the aristocracy. Macklin's attachment was literature, and the flattery of persons who were beneath him. When the celebrated lines, therefore, were repeated to the former :—

This is the Jew
 That Shakspeare drew.

Quin curled up his lip, and responded :—

Spew, reader, spew!

JOHN BERNARD : 'Retrospections of the Stage,' *vol. i., chap. 4.*

QUIN, MACKLIN AND RICH.

"Your servant, sir," says surly Quin.

"Sir, I am yours," replies Macklin.

"Why, you're the very Jew you play,
Your face performed the task well."

"And you are *Sir John Brute*, they say,
And an accomplished *Maskwell*."

Says Rich, who heard the sneering elves,
And knew their horrid hearts,

"Acting too much your very selves,
You overdo your parts."

WILLIAM HOGARTH : quoted from Dodd's 'Epigrammatists,' *p. 356.*

When no rehearsals interfered, his lordship [Earl Conyngham] honored me by invitations to breakfast, over which I would chat to him the nature of the past night's performances. Theatricals were a favorite theme with him, and the glories of the stage engrossed the greenest field of his remembrance. Quin was his great actor, and he loved to pitch him continually against Garrick in comedy and tragedy. Garrick could neither play *Falstaff* nor *Sir John Brute*, *Cato* nor *Othello*; two of which being Shakspeare's *chef-d'œuvres*, he considered Quin (who was excellent in all) to have the greatest genius. He remembered in his early days seeing Garrick and Quin play *Cassius* and

Brutus, and he described the effect of the "grand scene" by this powerful image. Quin resembled a solid three-decker, lying quiet and scorning to fire; but with the evident power, if put forth, of sending its antagonist to the bottom;—Garriek a frigate turning round it, attempting to grapple, and every moment threatening an explosion that would destroy both.

JOHN BERNARD: 'Retrospections of the Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. i.*

Quin was considered by the public as a kind of wholesale dealer in rough fun, and as much attention was paid to his wit sometimes as it probably deserved. Dining one day at a party in Bath he muttered something which caused a general murmur of delight; a nobleman present who was not illustrious for the brilliancy of his ideas exclaimed, "What a pity it is Quin, my boy, that a clever fellow like you should be a player!" Quin flashed his eye and replied, "What would your Lordship have me to be—a Lord?"

JOHN GALT: 'Lives of the Players,' *s. v. James Quin.*

A certain officer in the army who was not altogether so courageous as might have been wished for, in a person of his station, having one night at Bath, received the grossest personal affront, that of being taken by the nose without in any way resenting it, he waited upon Quin the next morning to ask his advice, and know how he should act. "Why, sir," said he, "soap your nose for the future, and then, by God, they'll slip their hold."

Ibid.

Some time before he died he was observing to an intimate acquaintance, that he felt the old man coming upon him : but that he had this satisfaction, let him die when he would, he owed nothing to any man, not even to James Quin.

Ibid.

Quin was one night going upon the stage in the character of *Cato*, when Mrs. Cibber pulled him back to tell him that he had a hole in his stocking. "Darned stockings I detest," said Quin, "that seems premeditated poverty."

Ibid.

Quin thought angling a very barbarous diversion, and on being asked why, gave this reason : "Suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison, and go a Quinning,—I should certainly bite, and what a sight I should be dangling in the air."

When he first saw Westminster Bridge, he exclaimed, "Oh, that my mouth were that centre arch, and that the river ran claret."

Ibid.

QUIN'S SOLILOQUY ON SEEING THE EMBALMED BODY OF
DUKE HUMPHREY AT SAINT ALBANS.

O plague on Egypt's arts, I say !
Embalm the dead ! On senseless clay
Rich wines and spices waste !
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle, lie,
Which I can never taste ?

Let me embalm this flesh of mine
With Turtle-fat, and Bordeaux wine,
And spoil th' Egyptian trade !
Than Humphrey's Duke more happy I—
Embalmed alive, old Quin shall die,
A mummy ready made.

DAVID GARRICK: quoted in Dodd's 'Epigrammatists,' p. 413.

Quin (as Sir George Beaumont told me) was once at a very small dinner-party. The master of the house pushing a delicious pudding towards Quin, begged him to take it. A gentleman had just before helped himself to a large piece of it. "Pray," said Quin, looking first at the gentleman's plate and then at the dish, "which *is* the pudding?"

'Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.'

Lord Chesterfield saw a couple of chairmen helping a heavy gentleman into a sedan, and he asked his servant if he knew who that stout gentleman was. "Only Mr. Quin, my lord, going home, as usual, from The Three Tuns." "Nay, sir," answered my lord, "I think Mr. Quin is taking one of the three home with him under his waistcoat."

His capacity was undoubtedly great, but the over-testing it occasionally affected his acting. An occasion on which he was playing *Balance* in the 'Recruiting Officer,' Mrs. Woffington acting *Sylvia*, his daughter, affords an instance. In the second scene of the second act, he should have asked his daughter: "*Sylvia*, how old were you when your mother *died*?" Instead of which he said "*married*." *Sylvia* laughed, and being

put out of her cue, could only stammer, "What, sir?" "Pshaw!" cried the more confused *Justice*, "I mean how old were you when your mother *was born*?" Mrs. Woffington recovered her self-possession, and taking the proper cue, said, "you mean, sir, when my mother died. Alas!" etc., etc.

He was one of the few men who could stand a fall with Foote, and come off the better man. Foote who could not endure a joke made on himself, broke friendship with Quin on such offense. Ultimately they were reconciled; but even then Foote referred to the provocation: "Jemmy, you should not have said that I had but one shirt, and that I lay abed while it was washed!" "Sammy," replied Quin, "I never *could* have said so, for I never knew that you had a shirt to wash."

In the roughest of Quin's jests there was no harm meant, and many of his jokes manifested the kindness of his heart. Here is an obscure actor, Dick Winston, lying,—hungry weary and disengaged,—on a truckle bed, in the neighborhood of Covent Garden. He had wilfully forfeited an old engagement, turned itinerant, starved, and returned, only to find his old place occupied. He is on his back in utter despair, as Mr. Quin enters, followed by a man carrying a decent suit of clothes; and the great actor hails him with a "Now, Dick, how is it you are not up and at rehearsal?" Quin had heard of his distress, got him restored to his employment, and took this way of announcing it. Winston dressed himself in a state of bewilderment; a new dress and a new engagement—but no cash wherewith to obtain a breakfast! "Mr. Quin," he said unhesitatingly, "what shall I do for a little ready

money till Saturday arrives?" "Nay," replied Quin, "I have done all I can for you; but as for money, Dick, you must put your hand in your own pocket." Quin had put a £10 note there! Again: when Ryan asked, in an emergency, for a loan, the answer from Quin was, that he had nothing to lend; but he had left Ryan £1,000 in his will, and Ryan might have that, if he were inclined to cheat the government of the legacy duty.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol i., chap. 28.*

KATHARINE CLIVE.

1711—1785.

Here liv'd the laughter loving dame—
A matchless actress, Clive her name ;
The Comic Muse with her retir'd,
And shed a tear when she expir'd.

HORACE WALPOLE.



KATHARINE CLIVE.

KATHARINE CLIVE.

In the year 1731, Henry Fielding, producing, as his critics said, about four plays a season, arrived at the farce of the 'Lottery.' The chief part, that of *Chloe*, a country girl, was taken by a young actress with a musical voice, a native freshness, and an inexhaustible fund of comic power. Her name was Katharine Raftor. The daughter of an Irish gentleman who had fought for King James at the Boyne, held a commission from Louis XIV., and finally settled quietly in London under Anne, she had been engaged about two years previously by Colley Cibber upon the strength of her vocal talents, and had made her *début* as a page in Lee's tragedy of 'Mithridates, King of Pontus.' She was then eighteen, having been born in 1711. In 1729 she was cast for *Phillida* in 'Love is a Riddle,' that ballad opera of which poor Colley took the failure so much to heart, and she almost succeeded in saving it. But her real triumph was two years later, when she fairly took the town by storm as *Nell*, the cobbler's wife, in Coffey's opera of the 'Devil to Pay.' Her salary was increased, and her popularity henceforth assured. In the next year she acted in Fielding's adaptation from Molière of the 'Mock Doctor,' her part being of course that of *Dorcas*, the English equivalent of the original *Martine*; and in 1734 he transferred

from Regnard, specially for her, the lively little comedy of the 'Intriguing Chambermaid.' By this time she had changed her name, having married a brother of Mr. Baron Clive; and Fielding, in an enthusiastic preface to his play, which owed its success to her acting, speaks of her as "the best Wife, the best Daughter, the best Sister, and the best Friend."

After this grateful laudation, it is an anti-climax to record that Mrs. Clive seems to have been speedily separated from her husband, though during her long life no word of scandal ever assailed her character. In 1742, when—to quote Walpole—she was "mimicking the Muscovita admirably" in Fielding's farce of 'Miss Lucy in Town,' Garrick was "all the run" at Goodman's Field; and when later he came to Drury Lane she was for a long time associated with him. Both were thoroughly alive to each other's merits; both were jealous of each other; and as Mrs. Clive, whose normal condition was good humor, was also as inflammable as touchwood, the conjunction was by no means idyllic. When she was annoyed with him, she delighted in harassing and disconcerting him. Once—so runs the story—having gone to the wings to watch him playing *Lear*, she found herself completely subdued by his marvelous power, and finally flounced away, between tears and anger, muttering that she believed he could act a gridiron. But for forty years Garrick also knew that as a country-girl, a hoyden, a chambermaid, and an old woman, he had no actress who could eclipse good-hearted, hot-headed Kitty Clive. Johnson, no mean judge, called her "the best player that he ever saw." "What Clive did best," he says, "she did better than Garrick;" and the old

moralist delighted in her witty conversation, while she, on her side, was flattered at attracting him. Goldsmith, writing on 'High Life below Stairs,' in which she acted, declared that she had "more true humor than any other actress upon the English or any other stage" he had seen. After these two opinions, minor verdicts may be suppressed. But it should not be forgotten that this excellence was attained without personal charms. Mrs. Clive was decidedly plain; and in middle-life grew so exceedingly stout that once, when she was acting in the 'Careless Husband' with Mrs. Pritchard (who suffered from a like infirmity), the audience was entertained with the spectacle of two leading actresses, neither of whom could pick up a letter which had been dropped. She was, moreover, illiterate, and spelled indifferently. She made her capital entirely out of her genius, her *vis comica* and her exuberant vivacity. In tragedy she won no laurels.

When she was nearly sixty, in April, 1769, she retired from the stage to a house which Horace Walpole gave up to her near his own—"little Strawberry," he called it, or more familiarly *Clive-den*. It was afterwards inhabited by his later favorites, the Miss Berrys. Here, with a pensioner in the shape of her brother James, who had never succeeded as an actor, she passed the quiet close of a bustling life. Ladies of quality petted her; wits and fine gentlemen enjoyed her quadrille parties and little suppers; while Garrick, relieved from the strain of daily combat, became only an indulgent friend to his "Pivey," as he called the ex-stage-queen, who was now equally disposed to recognize his extraordinary gifts. Walpole's letters contain many

references to his neighbor and her doings, her *bon-mots* and her good-humor, her cheerful, ruddy face, that was "all sun and vermillion." Towards 1777 her health began to fail, and she finally died painlessly on Dec. 7, 1785, being then seventy-five. She is buried at Twickenham, where a mural slab was erected to her on the outer wall of the parish church by her *protégée* and successor, Miss Pope, the author of a long and laudatory inscription, beginning :—

Clive's blameless life this tablet shall proclaim,
Her moral virtues and her well earned fame.

But her artistic epitaph is more compactly written in Churchill's 'Rosciad' :—

Original in spirit and in ease,
She pleas'd by hiding all attempts to please.
No comic actress ever yet could raise
On Humor's base, more merit or more praise.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

First, giggling, plotting chambermaids arrive,
Hoydens and romps led on by Gen'ral Clive.
In spite of outward blemishes she shone ;
For Humor fam'd, and Humor all her own.
Easy as if at home the stage she trod ;
Nor sought the critic's praise, nor fear'd his rod.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad' (*Ed.* 1763).

Mrs. Clive when very young had a strong propensity to acting. Her first theatrical engagement to Booth, Wilks, and Cibber, in 1727, was principally owing to the goodness of her voice, and to some proficiency which she had made in singing; nor till her merit as an actress showed itself in *Nell*, the cobbler's wife, was she considered in any other light than as one qualified to entertain the audience with a song between the acts of a play, or to act some innocent country girl, such as *Phillida* in 'Damon and Phillida.' An engraving of her in that character is still to be seen in the print-shops. The comic abilities of this actress have not been excelled, nor indeed scarcely equalled, by any performer, male or female, these fifty years; she was so formed by nature to represent a variety of lively, laughing, droll, humorous, affected, and absurd characters, that what Colley Cibber said of Nokes may with equal truth be applied to her; for Clive had such a stock of comic force about her, that she, like Nokes, had little more to do than to perfect herself in the words of a part and to leave the rest to nature; and if he, by the mere power of his action, kept alive several comedies, which after his death became obsolete, it may be justly said of her, that she created several parts in plays of which the poet scarce furnished an outline, and that many dramatic pieces are now lost to the stage for want of her animating spirit to preserve them. A more extensive work in comedy than that of Mrs. Clive cannot be imagined. Mrs. Clive in private life was so far above censure that her conduct, in every relation of it, was not only laudable, but exemplary. Her company was always courted by women of high rank and character, to whom she

rendered herself very agreeable. She is still visited by many distinguished persons of both sexes. Her conversation is a mixture of uncommon vivacity, droll worth and honest bluntness.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. ii., chap. 43.*

Kitty Clive, plain of face, warm of temper, sharp of tongue was pleased to regard this Woffington as her rival. Kitty had made her *début* as a page in 'Mithridates, King of Pontus,' in the Drury Lane play-house.

The page which the youthful Kitty represented was not quite a mute creature, with no better task than supporting a train, or carrying a cup; but had a song to sing proper to the circumstances of the scene, which was received with extraordinary applause. But from pages in silken hose, velvet jerkin and feathered cap, she gradually worked her way to better parts. She had once by her singing forced a reluctant audience to give a hearing to Colley Cibber's 'Love in a Riddle,' a favor denied to His Gracious Majesty of the following night; she had likewise been called "a charming little devil" by one of the pretty fellows of the stage box; and presently she laid claim to be considered a great comic actress, by her brilliant, blithesome rendering of *Nell* in the 'Devil to Pay,' a ballad farce of Coffey's, as well as by her representation of singing chambermaids (chambermaids always sang in those days), hoidens, romps and vulgar fine ladies. But she who had been styled "a charming little devil," possessed a soul that loftily soared above comedy, to the sublime regions of tragedy; and her greatest delight in life was to play *Ophelia*, *Desdemona* and *Portia*.

Under her treatment these characters were little less than burlesques, especially when, in the trial scene, she, as *Portia*, introduced comic business and mimicked to the life the famous Lord Mansfield, whose peculiarities were the laughing-stock of the town.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY: 'Peg Woffington,' *vol. i., chap. 5.*

Clive had that power of identification which belongs only to the great intellectual players. She was a born buxom, roguish chambermaid, fierce virago, chuckling hoiden, brazen romp, stolid country girl, affected fine lady, and thoroughly natural old woman of whatever condition in life. From *Phillida* in 'Love in a Riddle,' her first original character, to *Mrs. Winifred* in the 'School for Rakes,' her last, with forty years of toil and pleasure between them, she identified herself with all. But in parts like *Portia* and *Zara*, which Mrs. Clive essayed, she fell below their requirements, though I do not know how the most beautifully expressive voice in the world could have been "awkwardly dissonant" in the latter part. Her *Portia* was too flippant, and in the trial scene it was her custom to mimic the most celebrated lawyer of the day. The laughter raised thereby was uncontrollable, but it was as illegitimately awakened as Doggett's when he played *Shylock* as a low-comedy part. After forty years' service Mrs. Clive took leave of the stage, April 24, 1769, in *Flora* in the 'Wonder' and the *Fine Lady* in 'Lethe.' Garrick played *Don Felix*, King *Lissardo*, and Mrs. Barry *Violante*; a grand cast, in which we are told Mrs. Clive made *Flora*, in the estimation of the audience, equal to *Felix* and *Violante*. Drury Lane,

had it been capacious enough, would have held twice the number that gained admittance. From there she took leave, in an epilogue, weak and in bad taste, written by her friend Walpole, who affected to despise the writers of such addresses, and in this case did not equal those whom he despised.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. 10.*

He [Dr. Johnson] used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury Lane Theatre, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comic powers, and conversed more with her than with any of them. He said, "Clive, sir, is a good thing to sit by; she always understands what you say." And she said of him, "I love to sit by Dr. Johnson; he always entertains me."

JAMES BOSWELL: 'Life of Johnson,' 1780; *æt.* 71.

In the course of the evening he thus gave his opinion upon the merits of some of the principal performers whom he remembered to have seen upon the stage. "Mrs. Porter in the vehemence of rage, and Mrs. Clive in the sprightliness of humor, I have never seen equalled. What Clive did best, she did better than Garrick; but could not do half so many things well; she was a better romp than any I ever saw in nature."

Ibid., 1783; *æt.* 74.

Great a favorite as you at present are with the audience, you would be much more so were they acquainted with your private character; could they

see you laying out great part of the profits which arise to you from entertaining them so well, in the support of an aged father ; did they see you who can charm them on the stage with personating the foolish and vicious characters of your sex acting in real life the part of the best wife, the best daughter, the best sister, and the best friend.

HENRY FIELDING : *Dedicatory Epistle prefixed to the* 'Intriguing Chambermaid.'

Shortly before she left the stage she and many others were attacked by Hugh Kelly in a pamphlet called 'Thespis.' His doggerel rhymes were abusive and unjust, though it may be noted that "the talents for satire displayed in this work by Mr. Kelly, recommended him at once to the notice of Mr. Garrick." Here is an extract from his satire on Kitty Clive :

Form'd for those coarse and vulgar scenes of life
Where low-bred rudeness always breathes in strife
When in some blessed union we find
The deadliest temper with the narrowest mind ;
The boldest front that never knew a fear,
The flintiest eye that never shed a tear,
Then not an actress certainly alive
Can e'er dispute pre-eminence with Clive.

A little while after the publication of this pamphlet, Kelly was anxious that she should appear in his new comedy, 'False Delicacy,' knowing that her playing would tend toward making it a success ; but now came a revenge which was sweet, especially to Kitty. She refused to read a line of his play, though she was in consequence assailed by the press, threatened with the managerial anger, and, what was more to her, menaced

with a heavy fine ; but she was "game to the backbone," as Lacy said, and she stoutly refused to help Kelly by exercising the talents he had abused. "I'll see the puppy hanged first," she said, and she remained true to her determination.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY, in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, Oct. 1885 ; *pp.* 22-3.

My poor old friend is a great loss ; but it did not much surprise me, and the manner comforts me. I had played at cards with her at Mrs. Gostling's three nights before I came to town, and found her extremely confused, and not knowing what she did ; indeed, I perceived something of that sort before, and had found her much broken this autumn. It seems that the day after I saw her she went to General Lister's burial, and got cold, and had been ill for two or three days. On the Wednesday morning she rose to have her bed made, and while sitting on the bed with her maid by her, sunk down at once and died without a pang or a groan.

HORACE WALPOLE : 'Letters,' *vol. ix.*, To Lady Browne, Dec. 14, 1785.

DAVID GARRICK.

1716—1779.

If manly sense, if Nature link'd with Art ;
If thorough knowledge of the human heart ;
If powers of acting vast and unconfin'd ;
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd ;
If strong expression, and great powers which lie
Within the magic circle of the eye ,
If feelings which few hearts like his can know,
And which no face so well as his can show ;
Deserve the preference ; Garrick ! take the chair,
Nor quit it—till thou place an equal there.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).



DAVID GARRICK
As Abel Drugger in 'The Alchemist.'

hereditary tyrannies of expression and characterization,—and he put nature and truth and passion in their place. Wisely, perhaps, he confined himself to this. He still played *Macbeth* in the uniform of a Georgian general officer, and *Lear* in a wig and flowered gown, but in these “lendings” he embodied a *Macbeth* such as the world had never seen, and a *Lear* which has never been equalled.

David Garrick came of an old family of refugees under the Edict of Nantes. His father, like Sterne's, was a soldier; his mother, though a Lichfield parson's daughter, had Irish blood in her veins. Their son was born at Lichfield on Feb. 19, 1716, and was educated at the Lichfield Grammar School. There were thoughts of making him a wine merchant and, in his boyhood, he was sent to an uncle at Lisbon. But he came back again; and when, a few years later, his father was in garrison at Gibraltar, it is David who is the medium between his family and the absentee. Then he formed one of the select (and strictly limited) band of young gentlemen who were “boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages” at Edial by Samuel Johnson, Pædagogus; and when that establishment broke up, it was in company with his quondam master, that, hopeful, but poorly equipped, he sought his fortune in London,—“I,” said the magister afterwards, “with twopence half-penny in *my* pocket, and thou, Davy, with three-halfpence in thine.” While living at Rochester with a certain Rev. John Colson, and studying for the bar, his father died; and shortly afterwards his Lisbon uncle, departing this life also, left him £1000. With this he joined his brother Peter in a wine business, of which he conducted the London branch, the country

branch being at Lichfield under Peter. The London cellars were in Durham Yard,—a situation with clubs and theatres all around it; and yet, notwithstanding some good customers, the business seems to have languished. When, in 1738, David Garrick's mother died he had developed an inborn passion for the stage which expelled all other ambitions, and in whatever way he had acquired his powers, was already an actor. His first performance seems to have been in a curious place, the room over St. John's Gate; and here to Johnson and some of Cave's pressmen, he acted Fielding's 'Mock Doctor.' Then he obtained the *entrée* to Drury Lane, and fell to scribbling verse and sketching farces. Soon came an unexpected opening. Taking, by chance, the place of a missing harlequin in Giffard's little theatre in Goodman's Fields, he obtained a provincial engagement at Ipswich, where he played *Chamont* in the 'Orphan,' *Aboan* in 'Oroonoko,' and *Sir Harry Wildair* in the 'Constant Couple.' Lastly came his appearance at Goodman's Fields, on Oct. 19, 1741, as *Richard III.*

It is ancient history now, that wonderful *début*, and the success that followed it. How Walpole did not like him, how Pope went to see him, how Chesterfield invited him to dinner, how the Town went horn-mad after him, and the train of waiting carriages lengthened daily,—all these things have been told and re-told. The most curious thing, however, is the accomplished excellence of these first impersonations. He seems to have been spared apprenticeship and to have set out with the perfection at which most men arrive slowly. Between his first appearance and May, 1742, he played some eighteen or nineteen characters, passing easily

from *Lear* to *Bayes*, from *Lothario* to *Lord Foppington*. In the following summer he visited Dublin, where his success was as great as it had been in London. It was in Dublin, on one of his benefit nights, that he first essayed *Hamlet*. When he returned he kept house for a time with Macklin and the bewitching Mrs. Woffington, an arrangement which would have been more fortunate if the habits of the trio had been more in unison. But Mrs. Woffington—so runs the story—"made the tea too strong"—a piece of extravagance which probably typified graver prodigalities. In 1745 he attempted *Othello*, not victoriously; and in 1746 occurred that contest with Quin to which reference has already been made, to be followed by further duels as *Falstaff* and *Hotspur* in 'Henry IV.,' and *Gloster* and *Hastings* in 'Jane Shore.' Quin conquered as *Falstaff*; but Garrick won the honors as *Hastings*. As *Abel Drugger* in the 'Alchemist,' and *Ranger* in the 'Suspicious Husband' he was already unapproached.

In 1747 he entered into partnership with Lacy at Drury Lane, gathering round him a splendid company. For women he had Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Cibber, all actresses of the first excellence; for men, in addition to himself, there was Macklin, and Barry, then in his prime. Barry was a splendid *Romeo* and *Othello*; Macklin, an incomparable *Shylock*; Garrick, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Sir John Brute* in the 'Provoked Wife,' and *Archer* in the 'Beaux' Stratagem.' In 1749 he married Mademoiselle Eva-Maria Violette, who was a *protégée* of Lady Burlington, and who had been a dancer. It was a love-match, and a thoroughly happy marriage. He went to live in Southampton Street, Strand, which long

continued to be his home. In 1750 he appeared as *Romeo*, not one of his best parts, and he did not eclipse Barry, who, in consequence of a disagreement, was playing the same character in rivalry at Covent Garden. But a few years later he entirely effaced his competitor as *Lear*, which had been and remained always one of his highest tragic efforts. The effect and impressiveness of his curse are described by eye-witnesses to have been absolutely awful in their intensity.

In 1763, by which time his vogue showed signs of failing, he took a trip to Paris, there to be welcomed and fêted by all the world and the flower of the French stage. Préville copied him; Clairon took lessons from him; he captivated Marmontel; he appeased even the captious and cynical Grimm. From France he passed to Italy, and at Naples received fresh ovations. Then, somewhat alarmed at the growing fame of a young actor named Powell, he hastened his return to England, re-appearing after certain coquetries about retirement, as *Benedick* in 'Much Ado about Nothing.' In this part he regained all his old popularity, and played as before to thronged and enthusiastic houses. In 1768 followed the rather absurd farce of the Shakspeare Jubilee. At Lacy's death in 1773 he became sole manager of Drury Lane. After this he acted less frequently; and finally in June, 1776, bade farewell to the stage as *Don Felix* in Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of the 'Wonder.' After three years spent chiefly in his pleasant country-house at Hampton he died, Jan. 20, 1779, aged sixty-three, and was buried in Westminster Abbey with a Duke and Earls for pall-bearers. His widow, faithful to his memory, and always mindful of his fame, survived him until October, 1822.

There are many portraits of Garrick. Reynolds painted him no less than seven times,—his most famous effort being the well-known composition in which the actor is shown divided between his first love, Tragedy, and his later goddess, Comedy. To Hogarth he sat more than once,—notably in the character of *Richard III.* Then there are portraits by Gainsborough, by Angelica Kauffman, by Zoffany, and others. That in the National Portrait Gallery is by Pine. From these the inquirer may gather as much as art can teach of the full, dark eye, sparkling with animation and eager intelligence, the marked and mobile features, the alert, graceful figure, which his contemporaries attribute to him. But the beautiful voice ranging in all its varied cadence from pathos to passion,—from the sigh of *Romeo* to the curse of *Lear*, lives on no canvas, and must be vaguely imagined from the records which follow. As a man, the detraction of his age has branded him with defects, of which it is sufficient to say that they are now known to have been greatly exaggerated. It is possible that he was not exempt from vanity; and it would have been strange if, in the almost unique eminence he enjoyed, he had wholly escaped it. If, as alleged, early poverty had left him over mindful of small things, let it also be remembered that he was capable of the most splendid generosity, and that, too, in cases where his kindness must have been coals of fire. As to his reported jealousy and envy, as many tales are told on one side as on the other. But if the worst be admitted, it can hardly be denied that he brought to the uneasy throne of theatrical management administrative talents of the rarest kind. He gathered round him a magnificent

constellation of dramatic talent, to which he himself was sun and centre. When Pope said of him at Goodman's Fields that "he never had an equal, and would never have a rival," the epigram was a prophecy; and Quin uttered a truer thing than he knew when he named him the "Whitfield of the stage."

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Let wits like spiders, from the tortured brain
Fine-draw the critic-web with curious pain;
The gods,—a kindness I with thanks must pay,—
Have form'd me of a coarser kind of clay;
Nor stung with envy, nor with spleen diseased,
A poor dull creature, still with Nature pleased;
Hence to thy praises, Garrick, I agree,
And pleas'd with Nature, must be pleas'd with thee.
CHARLES CHURCHILL: the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).

All the town is now after Garrick, a wine merchant who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it, but it is heresy to say so: the Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton.

HORACE WALPOLE: 'Letters,' *vol. i.* To Sir Horace Mann, May 26, 1742.

There were no official critiques in the daily papers which set out elaborately the details of the acting. Journals were too small, and all space was economized strictly for news; yet, under such conditions, the meagre news to be read next morning in the *Daily Post* became very significant. For its extent it is almost enthusiastic. "Last night," said the *Daily Post*, "was performed gratis the tragedy of 'King Richard the Third,' at the late theatre in Goodman's Fields, when the character of *Richard* was performed by a gentleman who never appeared before, whose reception was the most extraordinary and great that was ever known on such an occasion. We hear he obliges the town this evening with the same performance."

Another criticism, which is a little later in date, speaks of him as he appeared at this time. It remarked his nice proportions, and that his voice was clear and piercing, perfectly clear and harmonious, without monotony, drawling or affectation; "it was neither whining, bellowing, nor grumbling, but perfectly easy in its transitions, natural in its cadence, and beautiful in its elocution. He is not less happy in his mien and gait, in which he is neither strutting nor mincing, neither stiff nor slouching. When three

or four are on the stage with him, he is attentive to whatever is spoke, and never drops his character when he has finished a speech, by either looking contemptuously on an inferior performer, unnecessary spitting, or suffering his eyes to wander through the whole circle of spectators. His action is never superfluous, awkward or too frequently repeated, but graceful, decent, and becoming," This is worth quoting, even as showing the state in which the new actor found the stage.

PERCY FITZGERALD : 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. i., book i., chap. 3.* 1741-2.

On the third night of the season [Dublin, 1742], Garrick appeared as *Richard III.*, the Woffington playing *Lady Anne*, and the theatre was again crowded to excess by people of the first consequence, who three hours before the performance commenced had sent servants to keep their places. The combination of two such famous personages playing in the same house made the town mad ; and the scenes which were occasionally witnessed in the play-house were distressing. Women shrieked at *Richard's* death, sobbed aloud at sad *Ophelia's* madness, and went into hysterics over the sorrows of *King Lear*. . . . It was during this engagement that Garrick first attempted the part of *Hamlet*, which he had long and carefully studied. The Dublin citizens were not only enthusiastic admirers of the drama, but were moreover profound worshipers of Shakspeare ; therefore the announcement that Garrick was about to play this favorite character gave them unbounded satisfaction, and though their expectations were great they were not

disappointed. Never had they witnessed such acting. On his first appearance the marked melancholy of his face, the deep thought dwelling in his eyes, the listless movements and attitudes indicative of depression, struck all beholders ; while his mere utterance of the line, "I have that within me which passeth all show," sent a thrill of sympathy through their hearts. When presently the *Ghost* appeared the color fled from his face, the words trembled as they escaped from his lips. Then his exquisite sensibility, the melting tenderness of his love for *Ophelia*, the whirlwind of his passion, the depth and despair of his grief were portrayed with an effect never before produced.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY: 'Peg Woffington,' *vol. i., chap. 7.*

Now, my dear B., if, after what I have told you, you have been able to picture a Garrick to yourself, follow me with him one or two scenes. To-day, because I am somewhat in the humor for it, I will take the one out of 'Hamlet' where the *Ghost* appears to him. You know this scene already from Mr. Partridge's excellent description in Fielding. My description will not make the other superfluous, but they only explain it.

Hamlet appears in black attire, the only one, alas, which is still worn in the whole court, for his poor father, who has been scarcely dead a couple of months. *Horatio* and *Marcellus* accompany him in uniform. They await the *Ghost*. *Hamlet* has folded his arms and pulled his hat over his eyes. It is a cold night, and just twelve o'clock. The theatre is darkened, and the whole audience as still and the faces as motionless

as if they had been painted on the walls of the house. At the extreme end of the theatre one might have heard a pin drop. Suddenly as *Hamlet* goes rather far up the stage somewhat to the left, with his back to the audience, *Horatio* starts. "Look, my lord, it comes," says he, pointing to the right where the *Ghost* is standing immovable, ere one is even aware of it. At these words Garrick turns suddenly round, and at the same moment staggers back two or three paces with trembling knees, his hat falls to the ground, both arms—especially the left—are nearly extended to the full, the hand as high as the head, the right arm more bent and the hand lower, the fingers spread out and the mouth open. There he remains standing, with legs far apart, but still in a graceful attitude, as if electrified, supported by his friends. His features express such horror that I felt a repeated shudder pass over me before he began to speak. The almost appalling silence of the assembly, which preceded this scene and made one feel scarcely safe in one's seat, probably contributed not a little to the effect. At last he speaks, not with the beginning but with the end of a breath, and says in a trembling voice, "Angels and ministers of grace defend us," words which complete whatever may yet be wanting in this scene to make it one of the sublimest and most terrifying of which, perhaps, the stage is capable. The *Ghost* beckons him; then you should see him, with his eyes still fixed upon the *Ghost*, while yet speaking to his friends, break loose from them, although they warn him not to follow, and hold him fast. But at last, his patience exhausted, he faces them, and with great violence tears himself away, and, with a swiftness which makes one shudder, draws

his sword on them, saying, "By heavens, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me." Then, turning to the *Ghost*, he holds his sword out: "Go on; I'll follow thee;" and the *Ghost* moves off. *Hamlet* remains standing still, his sword extended before him, to gain more distance; and when the audience have lost sight of the *Ghost*, he begins to follow him slowly, at times stopping, and then going on again, but always with his sword extended, his eyes fixed on the *Ghost*, with dishevelled hair and breathless, until he, too, is lost behind the scenes. You may easily imagine what loud applause accompanies this exit. It begins as soon as the *Ghost* moves off, and lasts until *Hamlet* likewise disappears.

In the fine soliloquy, "O that this too too solid flesh would melt," etc., Garrick is completely overpowered by the tears of just grief for a virtuous father, for whom a frivolous mother no longer wears mourning, nor even feels grief, at a time when every parasite of the court should still be wearing black—the most unrestrained of all tears, perhaps because they are the only alleviation which in such a struggle between one duty and another duty an honest heart can procure. Of the words, "so excellent a king," the last word is quite inaudible; you only perceive it by the motion of the mouth, which closes immediately afterwards firmly, and trembling with agitation, as if to repress with his lips the only too clear indication of the grief which might unman him. This way of shedding tears, which shows the whole burden of inward grief, as well as the manly soul suffering under it, carries one irresistibly away. At the end of the soliloquy he mixes just anger with his grief; and once, when he strikes out violently with

his arm to give emphasis to a word in his indignation, the word (to the surprise of the audience) remains unuttered, choked by emotion, and only follows after a few seconds, when tears begin to flow. My neighbor and I, who had not yet exchanged a word, looked at each other and spoke. It was irresistible. . . .

Hamlet, who, as I have already reminded you, is in mourning, appears here with thick, loosened hair, some of it hanging over one shoulder, he having already begun to play the madman; one of his black stockings is half-way down his leg, showing the white understocking, and a noose of red garter hangs down the middle of the calf. Thus attired, he steps slowly forward in deep thought, supporting his chin with his right hand, and the elbow of the right with the left, looking on one side on the ground in a dignified manner. Here, taking his right hand away from his chin, but, if I mistake not, still holding it supported by the left. He utters the words, "To be or not to be," softly; but they are everywhere audible, on account of the great stillness, and not through the peculiar gift of the man, as some of the papers state.

G. C. LICHTENBERG, translated by Walter Herries Pollock, *Longman's Magazine*, Aug., 1885.

MAY, 1776.

I have at last had the entire satisfaction to see Garrick in *Hamlet*. I would not wrong him and myself so much, as to tell you what I think of it; it is sufficient that you have seen him: I pity those who have not. Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of his perfections. The more I see him, the more I wonder and admire; whenever he does

anything capital, they are so kind as to get me into the pit, which increases the pleasure tenfold. He has acted almost all his comic characters *for the last time*. I have seen him within these three works *take leave of Benedict, Sir John Brute, Kiteley, Abel Drugger, Archer and Leon*. It seems to me on these occasions, as if I was assisting at the funeral obsequies of the different poets. I feel almost as much pain as pleasure. He is quite happy at the prospect of his release.

HANNAH MORE, quoted in 'Private Correspondence of David Garrick,' *second edition, vol. ii., p. 148*.

Jack Bannister told me that one night he was behind the scenes of the theatre when Garrick was playing *Lear*; and that the tone in which Garrick uttered the words, "O fool, I shall go mad!" absolutely thrilled him.

'Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.'

During my two years' residence in London I often saw Garrick. The delight his acting gave me was one of the silken cords that drew me towards the theatre. I liked him best in *Lear*. His saying in the bitterness of his anger, "I will do such things—what they are I know not;" and his sudden recollection of his own want of power, were so pitiable as to touch the heart of every spectator. The simplicity of his saying, "Be these tears wet?—yes, faith!" putting his finger to the cheek of *Cordelia*, and then looking at his finger, was exquisite. Indeed he did not get his fame for nothing. I saw him do *Abel Drugger* the same night; and his appalled look of terror where he drops the glass

drew as much applause from the audience as his *Lear* had done.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. i., chap. 3.

I should not forget to speak of Mr. Garrick's excellence in the dying scene of *John*. The agonies of a man expiring in a delirium were delineated with such wonderful expression in his countenance, that he impressed uncommon sensations mixed with terror, on the admiring spectators, who could not refuse the loudest tribute of applause to his inimitable action. Every word of the melancholy news, uttered by *Falconbridge*, seemed to touch the tender strings of life, till they were quite broken, and he expired before the unwelcome tale was finished.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Miscellanies,' vol. i., chap. 4.

I can add to this testimony a still higher authority in favor of Garrick's extraordinary merit as an actor. Speaking of Garrick once when the subject of acting was introduced in company with Mrs. Siddons, I observed so long a time had passed since she saw him act, that, perhaps, she had forgotten him; on which she said emphatically, it was impossible to forget him. Another time I told her that Mr. Sheridan had declared Garrick's *Richard* to be very fine, but did not think it terrible enough. "God bless me!" said she, "what could be more terrible?" She then informed me, that when she was rehearsing the part of *Lady Anne* to his *Richard*, he desired her, as he drew her from the couch, to follow him step by step, for otherwise he should be obliged to turn his face from the audience, and he acted much with his features. Mrs.

Siddons promised to attend to his desire, but assured me there was such an expression in his acting, that it entirely overcame her, and she was obliged to pause, when he gave her such a look of reprehension as she never could recollect without terror. She expressed her regret that she had only seen him in two characters, except when she acted *Lady Anne* with him,—and those characters were *Lear* and *Ranger*; that his *Lear* was tremendous, and his *Ranger* delightful. Nothing need be added to the testimony of one of the greatest ornaments of the stage which, perhaps, ever appeared since the origin of the drama, and whom, perhaps, it is impossible to surpass in theatrical excellence.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of my Life,' vol. i., chap. 28.

Garrick had also played the *Moor*, but had not succeeded in the part to his satisfaction or that of his friends. He had as *Othello* worn a Moorish dress which served to make his figure smaller than it really was. After witnessing the play one night, a friend of Quin's hastened to describe Garrick's personation to the sturdy old actor.

"Why, you must be mistaken, my dear sir," said Quin when he heard him, "the 'little man' could not appear as the *Moor*; he must rather have looked like *Desdemona's* little black boy that attends her kettle."

FITZGERALD MOLLOY: 'Peg Woffington,' vol. ii., chap. 7

Miss Lamb [Mary Lamb] being referred to, and asked if she remembered Garrick, replied in her simple speeched way, "I saw him once, but I was too young to

understand much about his acting. I only know I thought it was mighty fine."

CHARLES and MARY COWDEN CLARKE: 'Recollections of Writers,' *s. v. Mary Lamb*.

His schoolfellow and friend, Dr. Taylor, told me a pleasant anecdote of Johnson's triumphing over his pupil, David Garrick. When that great actor had played some little time at Goodman's-fields, Johnson and Taylor went to see him perform, and afterwards passed the evening at a tavern with him and old Giffard. Johnson, who was ever depreciating stage-players, after censuring some mistakes in emphasis, which Garrick had committed in the course of that night's acting, said, "The players, sir, have got a kind of rant, with which they run on, without any regard either to accent or emphasis." Both Garrick and Giffard were offended at this sarcasm, and endeavored to refute it; upon which Johnson rejoined, "Well, now, I'll give you something to speak, with which you are little acquainted, and then we shall see how just my observation is. That shall be the criterion. Let me hear you repeat the ninth Commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.'" "Both tried at it, said Dr. Taylor, and both mistook the emphasis, which should be upon *not* and *false witness*. Johnson put them right, and enjoyed his victory with great glee."

JAMES BOSWELL: 'Life of Johnson,' 1744, *et. 35*.

Sir Joshua Reynolds observed, with great truth, that Johnson considered Garrick to be as it were his *property*. He would allow no man either to blame or

to praise Garrick in his presence, without contradicting him.

Ibid., 1778, æt. 69.

JOHNSON : "Garrick was a very good man, the most cheerful man of his age ; a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness ; and a man who gave away, freely, money acquired by himself. He begun the world with a great hunger for money ; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make fourpence do as much as others made fourpence halfpenny do. But when he had got money he was very liberal." I presumed to animadvert on his eulogy on Garrick, in his 'Lives of the Poets.' "You say, sir, his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations." JOHNSON : "I could not have said more or less. It is the truth : *eclipsed*, not *extinguished* ; and his death *did* eclipse ; it was like a storm." BOSWELL : "But why nations ? Did his gaiety extend farther than his own nation ?" JOHNSON : "Why, sir, some exaggeration must be allowed. Besides, nations may be said—if we allow the Scotch to be a nation—to have gaiety—which they have not. *You* are an exception, though. Come, gentlemen, let us candidly admit that there is one Scotchman who is cheerful." BEAUCLERK : "But he is a very unnatural Scotchman." I, however, continued to think the compliment to Garrick hyperbolically untrue. His acting had ceased sometime before his death ; at any rate he had acted in Ireland but a short time, at an early period of his life, and never in Scotland. I objected also to what appears an anti-climax of praise, when contrasted with the preceding panegyric, "and diminished the public

stock of harmless pleasure ! ” “ Is not *harmless pleasure* very tame ? ” JOHNSON : “ Nay, sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise. Pleasure is a word of dubious import ; pleasure is, in general, dangerous, and pernicious to virtue ; to be able, therefore, to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess. ” This was, perhaps, as ingenious a defence as could be made ; still, however, I was not satisfied.

Ibid., 1779, *act.* 70.

“ Garrick, Madam, was no declaimer ; there was not one of his own scene-shifters who could not have spoken ‘ To be, or not to be, ’ better than he did ; yet he was the only actor I ever saw, whom I could call a master both in tragedy and comedy ; though I liked him best in comedy. A true conception of character, and natural expression of it, were his distinguished excellencies. ” Having expatiated, with his usual force and eloquence, on Mr. Garrick’s extraordinary eminence as an actor, he concluded with this compliment to his social talents : “ And after all, Madam, I thought him less to be envied on the stage than at the head of a table. ”

Ibid., 1783, *act.* 74.

Two bon mots on Mr. Garrick’s love of money and fondness for acting, Foote took care to repeat as often as they came into his mind. That he loved money so well, that whenever he should retire from the stage, he was sure he would commence banker’s clerk, for the pleasure of continually counting over the cash. As for the stage he was so fond of it, that, rather than

not play, he would act in a tavern kitchen for a sop in the pan.

THOMAS DAVIES : 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. ii., chap. 48.*

Now Garrick was always on a fidget, eager for attention and adulation, and when he thought himself free and adored would prattle such stuff as would disgrace a child of eight years old in conversation with its doting and admiring grandmother. His hesitation, and never giving a direct answer, arose from two causes—affectedness and a fear of being led into promises which he never meant to perform ; and therefore “By—nay—why—now if you will not—why I can not say, but I may settle that matter, and as I shall see you on Tuesday, why, then—hey—you know that—Mrs. Garrick is waiting—and you now—I say now—hey—now Tuesday. You will remember Tuesday?” As to money he seldom when walking in the streets had any, therefore could only lament his inability to give to a distressed suppliant ; but if greatly touched—“Why, Holland,” or any other person that was with him, “can not you now advance half-a-crown, and be d——d to you ?” which, if Holland did, was a very good joke, and for fear of spoiling the jest he never paid Holland again.

TATE WILKINSON, 'Memoirs,' *vol. i.*

Mr. Garrick in his person was low, yet well shaped and neatly proportioned, and, having added the qualifications of dancing and fencing to that natural gentility of manners which no art can bestow, but with which our great mother Nature endows many, even from infancy, his deportment was constantly

easy, natural and engaging. His complexion was dark ; and the features of his face, which were pleasingly regular, were animated by a full black eye, brilliant and penetrating. His voice was clear, melodious, and commanding ; and although it might not possess the strong overbearing powers of Mr. Mossop's, or the musical sweetness of Mr. Barry's, yet it appeared to have a much greater compass of variety than either ; and from Mr. Garrick's judicious manner of conducting it, enjoyed that articulation and piercing distinctness which rendered it equally intelligible, even to the most distant parts of an audience, in the gentle whispers of murmuring love, the half-smothered accents of infelt passion, or the professed and sometimes awkward concealment of an aside speech in comedy, as in the rants of rage, the darings of despair, or all the open violence of tragical enthusiasm.

'Biographia Dramatica,' *s. v. Garrick.*

To make up for his personal defects of height and general bearing, Garrick had recourse to a little artifice which may seem trifling, but which in one of his nervous temperaments, as to all that concerned the scene, became excusable. He selected for his *Robert Fauconbridge*, a poor miserable Scotchman out of his troupe, called Simpson, whose shrunk and pitiful appearance became an excellent foil. These little shifts were pardonable, but scarcely dignified.

PERCY FITZGERALD: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. ii., book v., chap. 1, 1763.*

Nature had done so much for Garrick that he could not help being an actor. She gave him a frame of so

manageable a proportion, and from its flexibility so perfectly under command, that by its aptitude and elasticity he could suit it to any sort of character,—his eye was so penetrating, so speaking, his brow so moveable, and all his features so plastic and accommodating, that whenever his mind impelled them, they would go, and before his tongue could give the text his countenance would express the spirit and passion of the part he was charged with (Cumberland). His voice was harmonious, his figure low, but pleasing and manly; his great aim in all his performances was to follow nature—he never indulged the wontonness of his fancy in stepping beyond her—though every passion of the human mind lay before him, he chiefly excelled in the stronger and more violent transports of the soul; his love was elegantly and ardently displayed, but he had not that overflow of tenderness, that profusion of softness, for which Barry was celebrated; in resentment, anger, tremor, rage, horror, and madness it is impossible to give an adequate idea of him; he was unrivalled in them all, he excelled in all mixed representations of grief and anger, fear and rage; in short, the more complicated the passions were the more happy was he in his representations of them. (*Gentleman's Magazine*.)

P. GENEST: 'History of the Stage,' vol. v., pp. 498-499.

This may not be an inconvenient place for pointing out that Garrick, like every other actor who has risen to the topmost place, was accused of, and no doubt had, what we call mannerisms, and that he seems to have had some odd tricks in his elocution. These are

pointed out by the excellent Dublin correspondent, of August, 1742, to whom if Garrick had had any clue to his address, he would, no doubt, in pursuance of his constant and courteous custom, have sent an answer. "The first thing I shall mention," writes the correspondent "(and which I insist upon that you reform), is your false pronunciation of several words, which can be owing to nothing but custom and prejudice in a man of sense, as I am sure you are. In your last performance I took notice of several false pronunciations, many of which I have forgotten. The words that I chiefly remember are these: matron, Israel, villain, appal, *Horatio*, wind; which you pronounced metron, Iserel, villin, appeal, *Horetio*, and the word *wind* you pronounced short. I cannot imagine what your objection can be to the letter *a*, that you should change it into an *e*, both in the English language and the Latin; or what fault you can find with the English word *matron* that you should be obliged to make it Greek. Does not *Horatio* sound much better than the little word *Horetio*. It is said that Horatius Cocles when he could no longer withstand the fury of his enemies, leaped into the Tiber. But what did he this for? Was it not for a name? Yes, surely, but never for the name of *Horetius*."

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in *Longman's Magazine*, Aug., 1885.

No remark was ever more true than that Garrick "*acted* both on and off the stage;" he was a glutton in praise; and after gorging upon the applause of thundering audiences and judicious critics, his unsatiated grovelling appetite hungered for the admiration

of a shoe-black or an infant :—he would steal a side-long look at a duke's table, to ascertain whether he had made a hit upon the butler and the footmen ; such was the littleness of the Great Roscius ! . . .

I have mentioned the uncommon brilliancy of his eye, but he had the art of completely quenching its fire ; as in his acting *Sir Anthony Branville*, a dramatic personage, who talks passionately with the greatest *sang froid*, and whose language, opposed to his temperature, breathes flame like Hecla in Iceland. In this part, I have been told, he made the twin stars, which nature had stuck in his head, look as dull as two coddled gooseberries :—But his *Deaf-man's* eye (of which I once witnessed a specimen at Hampton) evinced his minuteness of observation and gift of execution.

There is an expression in the eye of deaf persons (I mean of such as have not lost all perception of sound) which, difficult as it may be to exhibit in mimicry, it is still more difficult to define in writing ;—it consists of a mixture of dulness and vivacity in the organs of vision, indicating an anxiety to hear all, with a pretending to hear more than is actually observed, and a disappointment in having lost much ;—an embarrassed look between intelligence and something approaching to stupidity :—all this he conveyed admirably ;—and if I could convey it in words one tithe as well, I should have made myself more intelligible.

On the whole, with all his superior art in portraying nature, it is to be lamented that he outraged her in one character,—and that was his own ; he over-acted the part of Garrick.

GEORGE COLMAN, the Younger : 'Random Records,'
vol. i., chap. iv.

I am almost disposed to deny to Garrick the merits of being an admirer of Shakspeare. A true lover of his excellences he certainly was not ; for would any true lover of them have admitted into his matchless scenes such ribald trash as Tate and Cibber, and the rest of them, that

With their darkness durst affront his light,
have hoisted into the acting plays of Shakspeare? I believe it impossible that he could have had a proper reverence for Shakspeare, and have condescended to go through that interpolated scene in 'Richard III.' in which *Richard* tries to break his wife's heart by telling her he loves another woman, and says, "If she survives this she is immortal." Yet I doubt not he delivered this vulgar stuff with as much anxiety of emphasis as any of the genuine parts ; and for acting, it is well calculated as any.

CHARLES LAMB: 'Last Essays of Elia,' On the Tragedies of Shakspeare.

Perhaps the greatest honor that was paid him, if the honor is to be measured by the talent which bestows it, was the attendance of Mr. Pope to see his *Richard*. "As I opened the part," says Garrick himself, "I saw our little poetical hero, dressed in black, seated in a side-box near the stage, and viewing me with a serious and earnest attention. His look shot and thrilled like lightning through my frame, and I had some hesitation in proceeding, from anxiety and from joy. As *Richard* gradually blazed forth, the house was in a roar of applause, and the conspiring *hand* of Pope shadowed me with laurels."

The poet was so struck with the performance, that

turning to Lord Orrery, he said, "That young man never had his *equal* as an actor, and he will never have a *rival*." Pope's eye was remarkably keen and brilliant; he would in Garrick find a similar perfection. The force and finish of the actor's utterance, too, would strike the most pointed and perfect of our poets. We have said thus much to obviate a remark of the *malevoli*, that Pope praised Garrick from his desire to mortify Cibber. It will be remembered, too, that Pope said this with a perfect knowledge of Betterton, whose portrait he had painted, or it may be only copied. Garrick himself related to the Rev. Mr. Rackett, that Pope expressed his alarm "lest he should become vain, and be ruined by the applause he received."

JAMES BOADEN: Memoir of Garrick, prefixed to the 'Private Correspondence of David Garrick,' *vol. i.*, *p. vii.*

As an actor, Mr. Sheridan has done him justice. As a manager, he appears to have been liberal to his authors, and friendly to his actors. The profits to the first greatly exceed what they can now obtain; when the theatre, too, held at most £330. His performers had weekly salaries that seem *now* moderate, but were at that time sufficient; he besides wrote for their benefits and never refused to act for them. He only could fill the house. He encouraged of either authors or actors such talent as he could find, and cherished it, until they alike tried to invade his province as a manager. The authors were for subduing his judgment to the fellow-feeling of their brethren, and the actors were for choosing their own nights for performing,

and would discard or resume whatever characters became obnoxious or desirable from their whims or their jealousies.

As a MAN, perhaps he was not equally perfect. He saw his object singly, and perhaps too fondly. Sir John Hawkins, we believe, tells us that he once gave Mr. Garrick some intelligence very material to his interest, but he could not secure his attention ; a new pantomime engrossed every moment of his time. He paid great regard to the press, he even meddled with newspaper property, he anticipated attack sometimes, was irritated by it at others, and never practiced the policy of being silent. But his self-love as an actor was not alone to account for this. He was a proprietor of a concern, that flourishes but by the "popular breath ;" to engage the public mind, therefore, about *himself* and his *theatre*, was essential to the triumph of both. He had writers who were engaged in his *interest* in such vehicles, and he wrote in them himself.

Such was his avarice of *fame* ; but his love of *money* seems to have been more disputable ; or rather, he loved affluence for its independence, and the power it bestowed of obliging the great, and relieving the humble. He does the kindest things in the handsomest way. What friend, or man of merit, ever suffered a refusal ? We have *their letters* now before us. His bounties to those who could not solicit we may be sure were equally considerable, though never recorded. As a man of fortune, he was occasionally splendid, but never profuse. The elements of his friendship were fidelity and truth. If an improper pledge had been made, in the view to do him service, however his friend mistook the means, he ratified his engagement.

When we speak of him as a husband, he is a model to every lover of home ; and his taste as to Mrs. Garrick was sanctioned wherever she was seen and known, in the first societies in Europe. As a master, his servants were his children. As a *companion*, he was the delight of all ; nor did he disdain to divert even the poor black who waited upon him, and enjoyed his humor as much on the staircase as the master had done his wit in the company, when the champagne itself did not sparkle brighter.

Mr. Garrick was one of the most accomplished men of his time. He had the *classical* knowledge of a gentleman well educated ; and he cultivated the *Belles Letters* assiduously all his life. He was acquainted with the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the Italian languages ; the French he spoke, and even wrote, with elegance. He moved with the utmost ease ; he fenced with much neatness, and danced so as to be distinguished even among the most graceful. His manners were suited to the occasion ; and he was a master in all the science of address. He could mould, in conversation, the most restive to his purposes ; and many who came to a meeting, that they might unfold their *grievances*, quitted him without a hint of their nature, or with a feeling that they must have been imaginary.

As a writer, we can hardly tell what to say of his powers : we do not know, touching either character, thought, or expression, how much was really his in the plays of others. The two-act comedy, at least, was his own. Prologue was his chief province, and his fertility in such compositions, was inexhaustible. *Epigram* he made vigorous court to ; and *epitaph*, in some instances, owned no superior. In the light measures of

Prior he frolics like that poet himself, or Voltaire, or Gresset in the enchanting *Vert-Vert*.

To sum up his character :—When we consider the space he occupied in life, his fame in other countries, his predominance in his sphere, the numerous circles in which he may be said to have been the idol, the illustrious men who mixed *his* talents with their *own*; that he was never subjected to a single reverse of *fortune*, never involved in any touching *calamity*; that he was spared the *pangs* of family connection, and rejoiced that he was *without children*; in spite of severe annoyance from the malignant, and some chronic disorders, that clung equally to him in his course; we cannot but regard him as having enjoyed one of the happiest lots that ever gratified the ambition, or rewarded the energy of a human being.

Ibid., pp. 63-64.

You can't imagine, my dear Colman, what honors I have received from all kind of people here—the Nobles and the Litterati have made so much of me that I am quite ashamed of opening my heart even to you. Marmontel has wrote me ye most flattering letter upon our supping together. I was in spirits and so was the *Clairon*, who supped with us at M. Neville's. She got up to set me a going and spoke something in Racine's 'Athalie' most charmingly, upon which I gave them the Dagger Scene in 'Macbeth,' ye Curse in 'Lear,' and the falling asleep in *Sir John Brute*, the consequence of which is that I am now star'd at at ye Playhouse, and talked of by Gentle and Simple as ye most wonderful wonder of wonders.

DAVID GARRICK, in 'Posthumous Letters to the Colmans,' p. 242.

A Gentleman yesterday shew'd me a letter from England in which was the following lines to me—have they been in ye papers?

TO MR. GARRICK.

Take Pity Garrick on our Erring Youth,
Restore their minds to Shakspeare & to truth ;
Return, return, our hopes are all in Thee—
Save us—from Tweedledum & Tweedledee !

I have not got it right, the third line is better in ye Original but I have not time to recollect it.

DAVID GARRICK, in 'Posthumous Letters to the Colmans,' p. 281.

MRS. C. CLIVE TO MR. GARRICK.

TWICKENHAM, Jan. 23^d, 1774.

Wonderful Sir,—Who have been for these thirty years contradicting an old established proverb—you cannot make brick without straw ; but you have done what is infinitely more difficult, for you have made actors and actresses without genius ; that is, you have made them pass for such, which has answered your end, though it has given you infinite trouble :—you never took much with yourself, for you could not help acting well, therefore I do not think you have much merit in that ; though, to be sure, it has been very amusing to yourself as well as the rest of the world, for, while you are laughing at your own conceits, you were at the same time sure they would cram your iron chests.

'Private Correspondence of David Garrick,' vol. i., p. 610.

MRS. C. CLIVE TO MR. GARRICK.

TWICKENHAM, Jan. 23d, 1776.

Dear Sir,—Is it really true that you have put an end to the glory of Drury Lane Theatre? *If it be so*, let me congratulate my dear Mr. and Mrs. Garrick on their approaching happiness: I *know* what it will be; you cannot yet have an idea of it; *but* if you should still be so wicked not to be satisfied with that *unbounded*, uncommon degree of fame you have received as an actor, and which no other actor ever did receive—nor no other actor ever *can* receive; I say, if you should still long to be dipping your fingers in their theatrical pudding, (now without plums) you will be no Garrick for the Pivy.

In the height of the public admiration for you, when you were never mentioned but the Garrick, the charming man, the fine fellow, the delightful creature, both by men and ladies; when they were admiring everything you did, and everything you scribbled,—at this very ~~time~~ *time*, I, *the Pivy*, was a living witness that they did not know, nor could they be sensible of half your perfections. I have seen you, with your magic hammer in your hand, endeavoring to beat your ideas into the heads of creatures who had none of their own—I have seen you, with lamb-like patience, endeavoring to make them comprehend you; and I have seen you when that could not be done—I have seen your lamb turned into a lion: by this your great labor and pains the public was entertained; *they* thought they all acted very fine; they did not see you pull the wires.

‘Private Correspondence of David Garrick,’ *vol. ii.*,
p. 128.

From this time also, he had begun to taste in a far greater degree the pleasures of social life, the visits to great houses became more frequent, his enjoyment of club life and the company of men like Reynolds and Goldsmith more keen. His French training recommended him even more. To such entertainment the duties of the playhouse were a serious impediment. Indeed, it would seem one of the hardest incidents in the player's lot, that he is cut off from the time of the day most seasonable for enjoyment, that when others relax his labors begin. To keep his connections in "the City" he was careful to show himself several times during the winter at Tom's Coffee House in Cornhill, which the younger merchants frequented about 'Change time; and was very often found at a club, which had been established expressly for the sake of his company, at the Queen's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard and where he met his friends—Patterson, the City Solicitor; Sharpe, the Surgeon, Clutterbuck, Draper, and other steady business men, of sound sense—whom he consulted in every difficulty, and who were of infinite use to him with their advice. He used to be seen also at the Doctors' Club—Batson's, where he had many friends, among whom was a Doctor Wilson, who, in his old age, became an admirer of Garrick's playing, scarcely ever missed a performance, and had a special seat of his own in the pit. This character was always found at the coffee house surrounded by a party, for he was a good talker, and his theme was usually the praises of his favorite. It was scarcely surprising that Mr. Garrick should have been very attentive to this admirer. It is impossible not to commend this unwearied assiduity with which he

watched and cultivated that tender and delicate plant, the favor of the public. We might, like Hawkins, call them "little innocent arts;" and it should be remembered, that he had been already scared by a loss of popularity, and that after all, where such extravagant favor is bestowed, decency and a grateful appreciation will lose nothing to keep such favor alive.

He was a welcome companion at pleasant meetings; as indeed must have been "the first man in the world for sprightly conversation." Boswell's gay scenes, the nights at Sir Joshua's and Mr. Dilly's are too familiar to all to be repeated again; and they show the actor in a very pleasant light, rallying Goldsmith on the new coat; "Come, come, talk no more of that; you are not the worst, eh, eh?" Or "fondly playing" round Johnson, "the sage," as Boswell called him, indulgently. Garrick's talk is as agreeable as any of the others; and though his friend Colman held up some of his tricks—his never going into society "without laying a trap, to get out of his," his going away in a shower of sparks, caused by some good story of his, and his stealing glances to see how the "Duke's butler" was affected at the dinner party—still there is distinction between the really social Garrick, and the great actor and manager, on evidence, as it were, and feeling himself "a lion" at great houses, watched and admired, and expected to keep to his reputation. Every man of note must wear these two different dresses. No one should have known better than Colman's son how distinct such characters were. A little remark that Reynolds made to Northcote, lets us into a good deal of the secret of this acting off the stage. Sir Joshua said that the reason Garrick

continued on the stage so long and took such pains with his profession, was to retain his influence with important friends and distinguished persons, whose nature he knew well enough, to guess that, if he once lost his own consideration with the public, he should find himself deserted. This was the secret of that elaborate playing off the boards, of the unwearied pains, amounting almost to the routine of daily life, to keep up his reputation, for pleasantries and social gifts. The whole of Garrick's character and life indeed reveals to us a new philosophy: for the common tendency of the mere vulgar player, would be "to sink" the profession—ostrich like, hide it in the sand—forgetting that in the company of those who patronize him, he is sought and esteemed, for his genius and his profession. Garrick, with a superior wisdom, knew where his real strength and recommendation lay; and thus, by a nice economy, a careful regarding every point, reached a position that it now seems astonishing to look back at. Yet no man had such difficulties to overcome. The very calling of a player was a serious obstacle. "Sir," said Johnson, when he, for once, did justice to his old schoolfellow, "Garrick did not find but made, his way, to the tables, levees, and almost to the bed-chambers of the great." Even among his friends, it always seems to me that he had to struggle against some such feeling, in reference to his profession. They seemed to indemnify themselves for inferiority in other matters, by asserting their superiority in *that*, at least.

PERCY FITZGERALD: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. ii., book vi., chap. 3, 1768-9.*

The building [No 5 Adelphi Terrace] though

commodious rather than large and superb, was decorated by him in a style and elegance becoming the rank and refined taste of his visitors. One of the ceilings is adorned with a representation of Venus attired by the Graces, from the pencil of Zucchi; and, in the same apartment is a chimney-piece, finely sculptured, which is said to have cost £300. His collection of books and pictures were extremely valuable, and many of these remain nearly in the same state as when he inhabited the mansion, and derived from them that instruction and amusement which asserted in qualifying him for the entertainment of the public. There are anecdotes connected with topographical delineation, which are serviceable in determining the character of the place under notice, whilst they impart to it at least a transient ray of personal interest. Of such a kind is the following which is preserved in the 'European Magazine' when Garrick first took his house in the Adelphi, he was one morning speaking to a gentleman respecting its situation and convenience. "But," said the gentleman, "although the house is elegant there is not I believe any yard behind it?" "No," returned Garrick, "there is not absolutely a yard, but I think the space behind is thirty-five inches."

'Histrionic Topography, [London, 1818], pp. 6-7.

As I take leave of Garrick, I remember the touching scene which occurred on the last night but one of his public performance. His farewell to the stage was made in a comic character; but he and tragedy parted forever the night before. On that occasion he played *Lear* to the *Cordelia* of Miss Younge. As the curtain descended they lay on the stage hand in hand, and

hand in hand they rose and went, Garrick silently leading, to his dressing-room; whither they were followed by many of the company. There stood *Lear* and *Cordelia*, still hand in hand, and mute. At last Garrick exclaimed, "Ah Bessy, this is the last time I shall ever be your father; *the last time!*" and he dropped her hand. Miss Younge sighed too and replied affectionately with a hope that before they parted he would kindly give her a father's blessing. Garrick took it as it was meant, seriously; and as Miss Younge bowed her head he raised his hands and prayed that God would bless her. Then slowly looking round he murmured, "God bless you all!" and slowly divesting himself of his *Lear's* dress, tragedy and one of her most accomplished sons were dissevered forever.

DR. DORAN : 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. 8.*

. At Drury Lane Garrick appeared for the last time as *Don Felix* in the 'Wonder,' on June 10, 1776. He had been accustomed to take his share in the country dance with which this comedy used to end, with unabated vigor, down to the latest period, and he delighted in thus proving that his strength and spirits were unimpaired. On this final night the dance was omitted, and Garrick stepped forward in front of a splendid and sympathizing audience to take his one and final farewell. For the first time in his life he was troubled, and at this emotion the house was moved too, rather to tears than to applause. He could pen farewell verses for others, but he could neither write nor deliver them for himself. In a few phrases, which perhaps were not so unpremeditated as they appeared

to be, he bade his old world adieu. They were rendered in simple and honest prose. "The jingle of rhyme, and the language of fiction, would but ill suit my present feelings," he said ; and his good taste was duly appreciated.

DR. JOHN DORAN : 'Annals of the English Stage,'
vol. ii., chap. 7.

Yes, Madam, I do think the pomp of Garrick's funeral perfectly ridiculous. It is confounding the immense space between pleasing talents and national services. What distinctions remain for a patriot hero when the most solemn have been showered on a player? I do not mean at all to detract from Garrick's merit, who was a real genius in his way, and who, I believe, was never equalled in both tragedy and comedy. I suppose that in Garrick I thought I saw more of his art ; yet his *Lear*, *Richard*, *Hotspur* (which the town had not taste enough to like), *Kitely* and *Ranger* were as capital and perfect as action could be. In declamation I confess he never charmed me ; nor could he be a gentleman ; his *Lord Townly* and *Lord Hastings* were mean, but then too the parts are indifferent, and do not call for a master's exertion. Half I have said I know is heresay, but fashion had gone to excess, though very rarely with so much reason. Applause had turned his head, and yet he was never content even with that prodigality. His jealousy and envy were unbounded ; he hated Mrs. Clive till she quitted the stage and then he cried her up to the skies to depress Mrs. Abington. But if the town did not admire his acting more than it deserved, which indeed in general it was difficult to do,

what do you think, Madam, of its prejudice, even for his writings? What stuff was his Jubilee Ode, and how paltry his prologues and epilogues! I have always thought he was just the counterpart of Shakspeare; this the first of writers and an indifferent actor; that, the first of actors, and a woeful author.

HORACE WALPOLE: 'Letters,' *vol. vii.*, To the Countess of Ossory, Feb. 1, 1779.

Here lies David Garrick, describe him who can,
An abridgement of all that was pleasing in man:
As an actor confessed without rival to shine;
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line:
Yet with talents like these and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings—a dupe to his art,
Like an ill-judging beauty his colors he spread
And be-plastered with rouge his own natural red.
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting;
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turn'd and he varied full ten times a day;
Tho' secure of all hearts, yet confoundedly sick,
If they were not his own by finessing and trick;
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them
back.

Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame,
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who pepper'd the highest was surest to please.

* * * *

But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel, and mix with the skies!

Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will ;
Old Shakspeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH : 'Retaliation.'

MARGARET WOFFINGTON.

1719—1760.



A. Kneller pinx.
Mrs. Woffington
J. W. G. del.

MARGARET WOFFINGTON.

In Steele's comedy of the 'Conscious Lovers,' which, according to honest Parson Adams, contains "some things almost solemn enough for a sermon," there is at least one pretty scene of sweethearting. Like much of Sir Richard's work, its charm lies in its suggestion rather than its execution; and the critical modern reader would probably be intolerant of a serving-maid who has all the airs of a fine lady. Nor would he willingly endure a serving-man who makes allusions to Pyramus and Thisbe, and, under the influence of emotion, lapses into poetry. Moreover, the incident is not acted but narrated. *Phillis* bids *Tom* recall how he first came to love her. Whereupon *Tom* tells how he was once set to clean the sashes outside while *Phillis* cleaned them inside; how he was hopelessly smitten then and there, so that he nearly fell into the street; what time the provoking hussy, secure and impregnable, rejoiced at his discomfiture. "*You* know not, I warrant you," he says, "*you* could not guess what surprised me! You took no delight, when you immediately grew wanton in your conquest, and put your lips close, and breathed upon the glass, and when my lips approached, a dirty cloth you rubbed against my face, and hid your beauteous form; when I again drew near, you spit, and rubbed, and smiled at my

undoing." To which the dissembling and practical *Phillis* replies, "What silly thoughts you men have!" and *Tom* goes off into that convenient euphemism for impassioned prose—bad blank verse. But the little idyll lingers in the mind's eye, long after the words have faded from the memory.

Steele's *Phillis* was one of the favorite parts of the famous actress whose name heads this paper. It was also one of Mrs. Abington's parts; and yet somehow one fancies that Mrs. Woffington must have played it best. Her radiant vivacity, her delightful archness, her grace, her Irish *verve*—that Walpole mistook for Irish impudence—all these must have conspired to make her *Phillis* charming. And in what was she not charming, this washerwoman's daughter with the long delicate fingers, this imperious beauty from a Dublin back-street, who was the finest of stage fine ladies, whose distinction was unimpeachable, whose manners were perfect! She was charming as that supreme incarnation of elegance, indifference, and affectation, the *Millamant* of Congreve; she was charming as Ciber's *grande dame de par le monde*, *Lady Betty Modish*; she was charming as *Lady Townly* in the 'Provoked Husband.' She was inimitable, too, in such characters as involved masculine disguise—as *Rosalind*, as *Portia*, as *Silvia*, in the 'Recruiting Officer.' In Garrick's great part of *Lothario*, she seems to have failed; but on the other hand she fairly drove him off the stage as *Sir Harry Wildair*, which no one since Wilks had played with the slightest success. As to her rendering of Farquhar's airy and mercurial hero—the *Fantasio* of the Eighteenth Century—there can be no shadow of doubt. She seems to have taken from it a something

which was the author's and added to it a something which was her own, with a result wholly irresistible. That she actually made it "innocent," as Boaden says, is not quite easy to believe; but during her lifetime she played it without a competitor, and the managers always found "Mrs. Woffington as *Sir Harry Wildair*" a charm to conjure with. In tragedy her triumphs were less marked; but only in comparison with her triumphs in genteel comedy. She was one of the best *Lady Macbeths* of her day; she was *Cleopatra*; she was *Jane Shore*; she was *Calista* in the 'Fair Penitent'; she was *Constance* in 'King John'; she was *Roxana*, *Isabella*, *Monimia*, *Belvidere*—all the old sonorous heroines of Lee and Otway and Southerne. One of her last appearances was as the original *Lady Randolph* in Home's egregious 'Douglas,' when it was first produced at Covent Garden, in March, 1757. By this time, however, she was in her decline; and the piece did not suit her besides. Readers of the 'Virginians' will remember a pleasant chapter in that book where the Lambert family, with George and Harry, go to see the presbyterian gentleman's masterpiece. But though Miss Theo's tender heart was touched by Mrs. Woffington's "beauty and acting," Mr. Thackeray is true to tradition in abstaining from putting her praises into the mouth of any critical member of the company.

Margaret Woffington was born in Dame Street, Dublin, in 1719. Her beauty and charm as a child attracted the attention of a certain Mme. Violante, a performer on the tight-rope, to whom she was apprenticed, making her perilous *début* in public, it is reported, suspended from her mistress's feet. Afterwards she acted *Polly Peachum* in a Lilliputian company of the 'Beggar's

Opera,' which was one of Mme. Violante's next enterprises. Then she obtained a reputation as a dancer in interludes. Finally, in 1737, she made her first important appearance as *Ophelia*; and thenceforth, in such parts as *Lucy* in Fielding's 'Virgin Unmask'd,' as Steele's *Phyllis*, as Gay's *Polly*, she began to grow popular as an actress, in spite of a bad voice. Later she attempted *Sir Harry Wildair*, which speedily became her stock character. Having seen her in this, Rich at once invited her to Covent Garden. From Covent Garden she passed to Drury Lane, playing frequently with Garrick (to whom at one time she was to have been married), and obtaining almost as much applause as he did. From Drury Lane she went back again to Covent Garden, remaining there three years. Quitting it upon a pique, she repaired to Ireland, where she was welcomed enthusiastically by Thomas Sheridan, the father of the dramatist, and then manager of the Dublin Theatre. Here she was made chairman of the Irish Beefsteak Club which Sheridan instituted; and which, involving them both in the fierce political antipathies of the day, subsequently brought about the summary close of his management by the wrecking of his house. Mrs. Woffington accordingly appeared once at Covent Garden in 1754, resuming her old popularity with the part of *Maria* in the 'Non-juror,' Cibber's Whig version of 'Tartuffe.' At this date she must have been five-and-thirty. But her theatrical conquests were drawing to a close. Though she played some of her former characters, it was plain that she was no longer the Woffington of old. "She never neglected her business," says Tate Wilkinson in his 'Mirror' for 1756-7, but "her health, spirits, and

beauty were visibly decaying." To the same writer, who knew her well, we are indebted for the strange and tragic termination of the story. On the 3d of May she was playing in 'As You Like It,' for the benefit of some of the inferior actors. "I was standing in the wings," says Wilkinson, "as Mrs. Woffington, in *Rosalind*, and Mrs. Vincent, in *Celia*, were going on the stage in the first act. . . . She went through *Rosalind* for four acts without my perceiving that she was in the least disordered; but in the fifth act she complained of great indisposition. I offered her my arm, the which she graciously accepted. I thought she looked softened in her manner, and had less of the *hauteur*. When she came off at the quick change of dress, she again complained of being ill, but got accoutred, and returned to finish the part, and pronounced the epilogue speech, 'If it be true that good wine needs no bush,' etc. But when arrived at 'If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards,' etc., her voice broke—she faltered—endeavored to go on, but could not proceed; then in a voice of tremor exclaimed, 'O God! O God!' and tottered to the stage-door speechless, where she was caught. The audience, of course, applauded till she was out of sight, and then sunk into awful looks of astonishment, both young and old, before and behind the curtain, to see one of the most handsome women of the age, a favorite principal actress, and who had for several seasons given high entertainment, struck so suddenly by the hand of Death, in such a time and place, and in the prime of life." She lingered for three years from that fatal night; but never again appeared before the footlights. Her last days were

of character excited the curiosity of the public. *Sir Harry Wildair* acted by a woman was a novelty. This gay, dissipated, good-humored rake, she represented with so much ease, elegance, and propriety of deportment, that no male actor has since equalled her in that part. She acquitted herself so much to the general satisfaction that it became fashionable to see Mrs. Woffington personate *Sir Harry Wildair*. The managers soon found it to their interest to announce her frequently for that favorite character ; it proved a constant charm to fill their houses. In Dublin she tried her powers of acting a tragedy rake, for *Lothario* is certainly of that cast ; but whether she was as greatly accomplished in the manly tread of the buskin'd libertine as she was in the genteel walk of the gay gentleman in comedy I know not ; but it is certain that she did not meet with the same approbation in the part of *Lothario*, as in that of *Wildair*. Her chief merit in acting, I think, consisted in the representation of females in high rank and of dignified elegance, whose graces in deportment, as well as foibles, she understood and displayed in a very lively and pleasing manner. The fashionable irregularities and sprightly coquetry of a *Millamant*, a *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish* and *Maria* in the 'Non-Juror' were exhibited by Woffington with that happy ease and gaiety, and with such powerful attraction, that the excesses of these characters appeared not only pardonable but agreeable. But this actress did not confine herself to parts of superior elegance ; she loved to wanton with ignorance when combined with absurdity, and to play with petulance and folly, with peevishness and vulgarity. Those who remember her *Lady Pliant* in

Congreve's 'Double Dealer,' will recollect with pleasure her whimsical discovery of passion, and her awkwardly assumed prudery. In *Mrs. Day*, in the 'Committee,' she made no scruple to disguise her beautiful countenance by drawing on it the lines of deformity and the wrinkles of old age; and to put on the tawdry habiliments and vulgar manners of an old hypocritical city vixen. As, in her profession, she aimed at attaining general excellence, she studied several parts of the most pathetic as well as lofty class in tragedy.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. i., chap. 27.*

On the evening of the 6th of November, 1740, at the hour of six o'clock, a brilliant and crowded audience had assembled in Covent Garden Theatre. In the royal box, "under a canopy of scarlet silk most richly adorned with gold tissue and tassels of the same," sat the Prince and Princess of Wales; and in the boxes around them, the gay and witty courtiers who had turned their backs on St. James's to frisk, flatter, sparkle and enjoy themselves in the light of the rising sun, who, never alas for him and them reached the meridian of his power. In the pit, as usual, sat the students of the Inns of Court, the men about town, the young fellows from the Universities, with their periwigs, swords, ruffles, and snuff-boxes; glib compliments on their lips, merry twinkles in their eyes, and much knowledge of stage affairs in their heads, by which they would presently, over a glass of wine, try their Irish actress and pronounce judgment upon her. Presently when the fiddles had played their last long-drawn notes, and the candles forming the footlights

had been judiciously snuffed, up went the heavy green curtain ; then a silence fell upon the house, broken only by the fluttering of fans and the snapping of snuff-box lids. Now for weeks previous the town was anxious to see the Woffington in this favorite character [*Sylvia*, in Farquhar's 'Recruiting Officer,'] the representation of which required so much spirit and vivacity ; and when on the night of her first appearance, she was in the second scene of the first act, discovered in an apartment, her mere appearance won upon the audience, and gained her a hearty round of applause. Slightly above the middle height, her figure had a symmetry and flexibility which lent a natural grace to her every movement ; whilst her luminous eyes, beautiful complexion, slightly aquiline nose and tender lips, completed a picture that charmed even to fascination. Then the ease of her manner, the justness of her gestures, the rapt expression of her face that seemed to reflect her speech, rendered her such an actress as had not been seen for years. Her playing indeed was nature, not art. Presently when this charming woman came on the stage in the apparel of a pretty gentleman about town with a red coat, a sword, a hat *bien troussée*, a martial twist in his cravat, a fierce knot in his periwig, a cane hanging from his button, the effect was marvelous. Her air was at once graceful and rakish, her delivery pert and pointed : the witchery of her glances was pronounced inimitable. There were no two opinions regarding her pronounced in the coffee-house that night, for all admitted that the satisfaction she afforded was beyond expression.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY: 'Peg Woffington,' *vol. i, chap. 4.*

When Woffington took it up [the part of *Sir Harry Wildair*] she did what she was not aware of—namely, that the audience permitted the actress to *purify* the character, and enjoyed the language from a woman which might have disgusted from a man speaking before women—as I have heard spoiled children commended for what would, a few years after, shut them out of the room if they ventured so far. No, Mrs. Woffington, in spite of Quin's joke, upon your supposing that "*half* the house took you for a man"—I am convinced that no creature there supposed it for a moment ; it was the *travesty* seen through-out that really constituted the charm of your performance, and rendered it not only gay but innocent.

JAMES BOADEN : 'Life of Jordan,' *vol. i., chap. 4.*

Garrick dissented from the general opinion of Mrs. Woffington's *Sir Harry*. It was a great attempt for a woman, he was willing to admit, but still it was not *Sir Harry Wildair*. No woman, he urged, could ever so overcome the physical difficulty of voice and figure as to identify herself with a male character. The justice of his objection is obvious enough. The character of *Sir Harry*, however, is not to be judged by ordinary standards ; it hardly affects to be real, or to resemble nature ; it is the creation of Farquhar—an incarnation of fantastic sportiveness. And something, it is clear, the part might gain at the hands of a female interpreter ; at whatever cost to her, a measure of its grossness would disappear. Much that *Wildair* is required to say and do would be in such wise deprived of its significance, and real advantage would accrue to the representation. At any rate, when two seasons

later, Garrick himself undertook the character, the result was very complete failure. He played the part upon two occasions only, and then abandoned it forever.

DUTTON COOK : 'Hours with the Players,' *vol. i., chap. 2.*

I have been two or three times at the play very unwillingly ; for nothing was ever so bad as the actors except the company. There is much in vogue a Mrs. Woffington, a bad actress ; but she has life.

HORACE WALPOLE : 'Letters,' To Sir Horace Mann, Oct. 22, 1741, O. S.

So you cannot bear Mrs. Woffington ; yet all the town is in love with her. To say the truth, I am glad to find somebody to keep me in countenance, for I think she is an impudent Irish-faced girl.

Ibid., foot note ; Mr. Conway to Walpole, Oct. 26, 1740.

Mrs. Woffington was an actress of all work, but of greater talents than the phrase generally implies. Davies says she was the handsomest woman that ever appeared on the stage, and that Garrick was at one time in doubt whether he should not marry her. She was famous for performing in male attire, and openly preferred the conversation of men to women—the latter she said talking of nothing but silks and scandal. She was the only woman admitted into one of the Beef-steak clubs, and is said to have been president of it. These humors, perhaps, though Davies praises her for

feminine manners, as contrasted with her antagonist, Mrs. Clive, frightened Garrick out of his matrimony.

LEIGH HUNT : 'The Town,' *chap.* 7.

Mrs. Woffington was an actress of a most extraordinary kind, and in some parts must have been unrivalled. She had a bad voice, but this seems to have been the only impediment to her becoming superlatively excellent ; for though it is universally allowed to have prevented her from interesting the passions in so eminent a degree as either Mrs. Pritchard or Mrs. Cibber, yet her superior beauty and grace, the industry with which she cultivated her profession by observing the instructions of Cibber, getting introduced to Mademoiselle Dumesnil, the attention she paid to Garrick, and every other eligible opportunity to improve, which she seized with solicitude and avidity, established for her a solid and firm reputation. She is said in *Cleopatra*, *Jane Shore*, and *Calista*, and all other parts which require a form of commanding and majestic beauty, to have interested her auditors to a degree of astonishment. She also greatly excelled in comic characters, but I cannot think it an addition to her fame, or to female delicacy, that the most prominent of those characters was *Sir Harry Wildair*. Resources are a bad specimen of great talents, and beauty like charity can hide defects.

CHARLES DIBDIN : 'History of the Stage,' *book ix., chap.* 10.

Mrs. Woffington was perhaps the most beautiful woman that ever appeared on the stage—she had ever a train of admirers—she possessed wit, vivacity, etc.,

but never permitted her love of pleasure and conviviality to occasion the least defect in her duty to the public as a performer—six nights in the week has often been her appointed lot for playing without her murmuring; she was ever ready at the call of the audience; and though in the possession of the first line of characters, yet she never thought it degradation of her consequence to constantly play the *Queen* in 'Hamlet,' *Lady Ann* in 'Richard III.,' and *Lady Percy*. She also cheerfully acted *Hermione* or *Andromache*, *Lady Plyant* or *Lady Touchwood*, *Lady Sadlife* or *Lady Dainty*, *Angelica* or *Mrs. Frail*, and several other parts alternately, as best suited the interest of her manager.

P. GENEST: 'History of the Stage,' vol. iv., p. 602.

Mrs. Woffington, though beautiful to a degree, had a most unpleasant squaking pipe,—an *Orange Woman to the Playhouse*:—"Would you have some oranges, chips, ladies and gentlemen,—would you have some nonpariels,—would you have a bill of the play?"

TATE WILKINSON: 'Memoirs,' vol. i.

From her portrait we can see that this notorious lady was not a bold, rosy-cheeked hoiden, as we might expect, but had an almost demure, placid, and pensive cast of face. She wore her hair without powder, and turned back behind the ear, nearly always with a cap carelessly thrown back, or a little flat garden hat set negligently on, à la Nelly O'Brien. Certainly, a deeply interesting face, but with a little hint of foolishness and air of lightness in all its calm, pale placidity.

PERCY FITZGERALD: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. i., book ii., chap. 1.

This admirable actress during the representation of this tragedy at Covent Garden Theatre, about the year 1750, was suddenly taken ill. The play was, however, announced in the bills. Mrs. Woffington, who was ever ready to show her respect to the public, and her willingness to promote the interest of her employer, came forward to the front of the pit, ready dressed for the character of *Constance*, and offered, with the permission of the audience, to supply Mrs. Cibber's place for that night. The spectators, instead of meeting her address with approbation, seemed to be entirely lost in surprise. This unexpected reception so embarrassed her, that she was preparing to retire, when Ryan, who thought they only wanted a hint to rouse them from their insensibility, asked them bluntly if they would give Mrs. Woffington leave to act *Lady Constance*. The audience, as if at once awakened from a fit of lethargy, by repeated plaudits strove to make amends for their inattention to the most beautiful woman that ever adorned a theatre.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Miscellanies,' vol. i., chap. 4

There is a particular instance of her generosity in Dublin, which should not be omitted. Her maid, who had been with her several years, having gained the heart of a young tradesman, resolved in exchange to give him her hand. On the morning of her nuptials, our heroine called in the girl and said. "You long served me with integrity, and it is time to make you some recompense. You are now going to be united to an honest man and since he is of some substance, it is not fit that you should go to him penniless. There is something to begin your new scene with, and I

request you to accept it as a token of regard:" so saying she put a purse of one hundred guineas into her hand.

JOHN GALT: 'Lives of the Players,' vol. 2, s. v. *Woffington*.

She quitted Covent Garden in 1751, at the close of the season. She was offended at the names of *Quin*, *Barry*, and *Mrs. Cibber* being printed in letters of unusual size upon the playbills which should have been devoted to the comedies in which she appeared. She felt herself subordinated to them, and slighted accordingly. Moreover she was too frequently called upon suddenly to act as a stop-gap, when the other players were, or affected to be, too ill to appear. On one occasion '*Jane Shore*' had been announced; but it was postponed. The '*Constant Couple*' being advertised to take its place, when the playbill was half occupied with the names of the tragedians, and with particulars of their future arrangements. At five o'clock *Mrs. Woffington* sent word to the manager that she was ill and could not play. Upon her next appearance, she was received with a storm of disapprobation, which she attributed to a conspiracy on the part of the manager's friends. The public, however, had some reason to complain of the many disappointments to which they had been subjected. "Whoever," writes *Tate Wilkinson*, describing the scene, "is living, and saw her that night, will own that they never beheld any figure half so beautiful since. Her anger gave a glow to her complexion, and added lustre to her eyes. They treated her very rudely, bade her ask pardon, and threw orange peel. She behaved with great

resolution, and treated their rudeness with glorious contempt. She left the stage, was called for, and with infinite persuasion was prevailed upon to return. However, she did ; walked forward, and told them she was there ready and willing to perform her character if they chose to permit her ; that the decision was theirs—on or off, just as they pleased, it was a matter of indifference to her. The ‘ons’ had it, and all went smoothly afterwards.” Yet Wilkinson was not a witness especially disposed to favor Mrs. Woffington. Something of a ventriloquist and a mimic by profession, he had roused her ire by his caricatures of her tragic tones. She had exerted herself to prevent his being employed at Covent Garden. Afterwards in Dublin he had played *Dollalolla* in the burlesque of ‘Tom Thumb,’ avowedly imitating Mrs. Woffington. “Take me off ! a puppy !” she cried angrily, “and in Dublin too ! If he dare attempt it, he will be stoned to death.” But by his own showing his mimicry was received with uproarious laughter.

DUTTON COOK : ‘Hours with the Players,’ *vol. i., chap. 2.*

The celebrated Mrs. Woffington, who had lived with Garrick, afterwards lived with Lord Darnley, who fancied that he could attach her to him by more than interested motives, if he kept her from the sight of Garrick, whom she professed to have really loved. Lord Darnley therefore exacted a promise from her, that she would not see Garrick during his absence from town, freely permitting her to see anybody else. He, however, thought proper to have a spy to watch her, and found that, notwithstanding her promise,

Garrick visited her in his absence. He took the first opportunity of telling her he had thought he could depend on her promise, but found he was mistaken, accusing her of having seen Garrick. "Garrick?" said she, thinking that what he said arose from mere jealousy, "I have not seen him for a long time." Lord Darnley then declared he knew she had seen Garrick the night before. Finding evasion useless, she exclaimed, "Well! and is not that a long time?" She was a perfidious woman. She lived till her death with General Cæsar, and they had agreed that the survivor should possess all the property of both; and when she was really on her death-bed, she sent for an attorney, made her will during the absence of the General, and bequeathed the whole of her property to her sister, Mrs. Cholmondeley. Lord Cholmondeley, whose nephew had married Mrs. Woffington's sister, was much offended at what he considered a degrading union in the family; but, on being introduced to Mrs. Woffington, some months after the match, he was so much pleased with her that he declared, though he had been at first offended at the match, he was then reconciled to it. Mrs. Woffington, who had educated and supported her sister, coldly answered, "My lord, I have much more reason to be offended at it than your lordship, for I had before but one beggar to maintain, and now I have two."

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of My Life,' vol. i., chap. 26.

In 1755 the celebrated Mrs. Woffington acted in the first play I ever saw—*Alicia* in 'Jane Shore.' I remember some some years after seeing her mother, whom she comfortably supported—a respectable-looking

ing old lady, in her short black velvet cloak, with deep rich fringe, a diamond ring, and small agate snuff-box. She had nothing to mind but going the rounds of the Catholic chapels, and chatting with her neighbours. Mrs. Woffington, the actress, built and endowed a number of almshouses at Teddington, Middlesex ; and there they are to this day. She is buried in the church, her name on the tombstone.

JOHN O'KEEFE : 'Recollections,' *vol. i., chap. i.*

SPRANGER BARRY.

1719—1777.

AND HIS WIFE,

(MRS. DANCER, MRS. BARRY, MRS. CRAWFORD.)

1734—1801.

In person taller than the common size,
Behold where Barry draws admiring eyes !
When lab'ring passions, in his bosom pent,
Convulsive rage and struggling heave for vent ;
Spectators, with imagin'd terrors warm,
Anxious expect the bursting of the storm ;
But all unfit in such a pile to dwell,
His voice comes forth like Echo from her cell ;
To swell the tempest needful aid denies,
And all a-down the stage in feeble murmurs dies.

What man, like Barry, with such pains, can err
In elocution, action, character ?
What man could give, if Barry was not here,
Such well-applauded tenderness to *Lear* ?
Who else can speak so very fine,
That sense may kindly end with ev'ry line ?

Some dozen lines before the *Ghost* is there,
Behold him for the solemn scene prepare.
See how he frames his eyes, poises each limb,
Puts the whole body into proper trim.—
From whence we learn, with no great stretch of art,
Five lines hence comes a ghost, and, Ha ! a start.

When he appears most perfect, still we find
Something which jars upon, and hurts the mind.
Whatever lights upon a part are thrown,
We see too plainly they are not his own.
No flame from Nature ever yet he caught,
Nor knew a feeling which he was not taught ;
He raised his trophies on the base of art,
And conn'd his passions, as he conn'd his art.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).



SPRANGER BARRY.

SPRANGER BARRY AND HIS WIFE.

Spranger Barry, son of a noted silversmith in Dublin, was born in 1719. Brought up, and succeeding to his father's business, and having a small fortune with his first wife, he mismanaged his affairs, became bankrupt, and commenced actor. He appeared for the first time on the stage at the Theatre Royal in Smock Alley, where he played with signal success amongst other parts *King Lear*, *Henry V.*, *Pierre*, *Hotspur* and *Orestes*. In October, 1746, Barry was engaged by Lacy and made his first appearance in London at Drury Lane as *Othello*, acquitting himself so well that shortly afterwards he appeared alternately with Garrick as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. After a success as *Romeo* he left Drury Lane for Covent Garden in the season of 1749-50. In 1750 'Romeo and Juliet' was produced at both houses. At Covent Garden Mrs. Cibber played *Juliet*, and Barry *Romeo*; at Drury Lane Mrs. Bellamy made her first appearance as *Juliet*, and Garrick played *Romeo*. It has been said that while Garrick commanded more applause than Barry, Barry drew more tears than Garrick. Macklin and Mrs. Bellamy agreed in preferring Barry's *Romeo* to Garrick's, Mrs. Bellamy making, however, an exception in Garrick's favor as regards the scene with the *Friar*. In 1754 Barry visited Ireland, but soon returned to Covent Garden. Four years

later he and Woodward went to Dublin and built the Crow Street Theatre, which was opened on Oct. 23, 1758. The rivalry between this and the old theatre resulted in loss to both, which did not deter Barry and Woodward from building and opening another new theatre in Cork in 1761. The following year Woodward went back to Covent Garden. Barry struggled on for four or five years longer and then gave up the Crow Street Theatre to Mossop and returned to London, acting at the Haymarket. He reappeared at Drury Lane as *Othello* in 1767 under Garrick's management; and in 1768 he married Mrs. Dancer, who was engaged at the same theatre. In October, 1774, Mr. and Mrs. Barry went to Covent Garden, where Barry remained until his death on Jan. 10, 1777.

With regard to Barry's method and capacities as an actor Mr. Knight, to whose excellent article in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' I am largely indebted, makes this general observation, suggested by Barry's rivalry with Garrick in *Romeo* and the diverse opinions expressed at the time on the two performances. "That Barry was superior in characters in which his noble figure, handsome face, and harmonious voice were of eminent service to him may be conceded. When intellectual subtlety was of more importance than physical gifts Garrick's superiority was easily shown." Davies, the bookseller and actor, whose 'Life of Garrick' and 'Dramatic Miscellanies' are full of interest and vivacity, hits off Barry thus: "Of all the tragic actors who have trod the English stage for these last fifty years Mr. Barry was unquestionably the most pleasing. Since Booth and Wilkes no actor had shown the public a just idea of the hero or the

lover; Barry gave dignity to the one and passion to the other. In his person he was tall, without awkwardness; in his countenance he was handsome, without effeminacy; in his uttering of passion the language of nature alone was communicated to the feelings of an audience. If any player deserved the character of an unique, he certainly had a just claim to it. Many of the principal characters in our best plays must now be either suffered to be dormant until another genius like him shall start them into life and spirit." Donaldson speaks of him as the beau-ideal of an *Othello* and *Romeo*; and Leslie refers to the repute of his "noble air of command," the elegance of his action, the regularity and expressiveness of his features, the richness of melody, strength and tenderness in his voice, and reports that "the greatest parliamentary orators used to study his acting for the charm of its stately grace and the secret of its pathos." Again, Murphy writes of him:

Harmonious Barry! with what varied art
His grief, rage, tenderness, assailed the heart!
Of plaintive Otway now no more the boast!
And Shakspeare grieves for his *Othello* lost!

In like manner O'Keefe writes of Barry as the finest actor in his walk on the stage, and picks out as his best parts *Alexander*, *Romeo* and *Jaffier*. "These requisites" may perhaps be thought to extend far enough to put Barry in the first rank of actors; for your player who is good alike in noble tragedy and in pure comedy, is a very rare fowl on the earth. It is difficult to understand why Leigh Hunt described Barry as "one of the old artificial school who made his way more by person than by genius," and it seems

later he and Woodward went to Dublin and opened the Crow Street Theatre, which was opened in 1758. The rivalry between this and the other theatre resulted in loss to both, which did not deter Woodward from building and opening another theatre in Cork in 1761. The following year Woodward went back to Covent Garden. Barry remained on for four or five years longer and then gave the Crow Street Theatre to Mossop and returned to London, acting at the Haymarket. He reappeared at Drury Lane as *Othello* in 1767 under Garrick's management; and in 1768 he married Mrs. Dandridge, who was engaged at the same theatre. In October 1770 Mr. and Mrs. Barry went to Covent Garden. Barry remained until his death on Jan. 10, 1777.

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likely that Mrs. Barry intended to include her husband in the Garrick School when she said that this school was "all rapidity and passion, while the Kemble school was so full of paw and pause, that at first the performers thinking their new competitors had either lost their cues or forgotten their parts used frequently to prompt them." Frederick Reynolds, the lively and ingenious playwright, saw Barry in his later days as *Othello*, but has commented only on his grotesque appearance in a suit of gold-laced scarlet and with a conspicuous pair of gouty legs, and goes on to describe a ludicrous quarrel at supper afterwards between Mr. and Mrs. Barry over the liver wing of a chicken which was bestowed by Mrs. Barry on Reynolds, instead of being reserved for the great actor.

Mrs. Spranger Barry, who was generally known by her third husband's name of Crawford, was born in 1734, and was the daughter of a well-known apothecary in Bath. She had, it is said, a disappointment in love at about the age of seventeen, and went to stay with a relation at York for change of scene and thoughts. There she fell in with Dancer, an actor, whom she married, and accompanied to the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin. She had, before her appearance in Dublin, played with success and promise on the York stage. After Dancer's death she married Spranger Barry, and when he left Dublin for London went with him to play at the Haymarket under Foote's management, appearing as *Desdemona* to Barry's *Othello*: the 'Thespian Dictionary' (1802) notes *Desdemona* as "a part, previous to her playing, considered as trifling." Afterwards she accompanied Barry to Drury Lane, and her acting there confirmed



MRS. SPRANGER BARRY
As Mariamne.

her in a place in the first rank of actresses. With Crawford, her third husband, her life seems to have been unhappy. Her last appearance on the stage was at Covent Garden in 1797. She died in 1801. As in the case of Barry—it may be added, as in the case of all actors of whom criticisms by different hands have been preserved—there is a strange divergence in the reports of her merit and method. Boaden says of her that “her voice was somewhat harsh, and what might be termed broken. In level speaking it resembled the tone of passion in other speakers. It was at no time agreeable to the ear; but when thrown out by the vehemence of her feeling it had a transpiercing effect that seemed absolutely to wither up the hearer—it was a flaming arrow—it was the lightning of passion. Such was the effect [in *Lady Randolph*] of her almost shriek to *Old Norval*, ‘was he alive?’ It was an electric shock that drove the blood back from the surface suddenly to the heart, and made you cold and shuddering with terror in the midst of a crowded theatre.”

Campbell gives an almost identical account of the effect of this speech, saying also that Mrs. Crawford was always too apt to vehemence and too inclined to seek for sudden startling effects rather than to rely on the effect of a part finely and accurately played throughout. Dibdin gives her higher praise, yet expresses the same impression in more forcible terms. “Mrs. Barry,” he wrote, “had more of Garrick’s merit in tragedy, and was equal to quickness, passion, rage, and an exposition of all the terrible and turbulent passions. Common grief was too tame for her expression. She knew not how to insinuate herself into

the heart—her mode was to grieve it. Admiration was not enough: she must beget astonishment. This difficult effect, it must be confessed, her acting very often produced; but it seldom happens that such bold and forcible strokes of art are free from inequality." It does indeed seldom happen, but there are instances, ready to the student of the drama, of players who making their first impression in this way, have afterwards rid themselves of this inequality, preserving the force of passion, but acquiring the temperance insisted on by *Hamlet*. This does not seem to have been Mrs. Crawford's case. Her powers were at one time so great that Boaden speaks of Mrs. Siddons' resolve to rival her in *Lady Randolph* as perhaps the most serious moment of Mrs. Siddons's professional life. But there came to her it would seem a time when her sudden bursts of overwhelming passion could no longer be relied on, and there was no careful and harmonious art at her command to atone for the deficiency in the old flashes. She had trusted too completely to temperament, and had not backed it by study. So it has been and so it will be with players who think of one great effect instead of thinking of the whole scene in which that effect may find its place. The tameness of what precedes it brings it into high, but false relief; and when the purely natural powers begin to wane it is first forced beyond relief to extravagance and then disappears altogether. And this is probably the truth contained in the rather crude expression of "A Stage Veteran," that Mrs. Crawford never *could* have been a *good* actress.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Next to Garrick, it will be proper to mention Barry, an actor of most extraordinary merit, which was confined, however, to tragedy and serious parts in comedies. In some respects it is questionable whether he did not excel every actor on the stage. These were in scenes and situations full of tender woe and domestic softness, to which his voice, which was mellifluous to wonder, lent astonishing assistance. In scenes of an opposite description he threw a majesty and a grandeur into his acting which gave it a most noble degree of elevation. These peculiar qualities, which he possessed in a very striking degree, were greatly manifest in the tender conflicts of the heart-wounded *Othello* and the haughty ravings of the high-minded *Bajazet*; and they were exquisitely blended in the fond yet kingly *Alexander*; but certainly, beyond these requisites, Barry's acting did not extend in any eminent degree.

CHARLES DIBDIN: 'History of the Stage,' *book x., chap. 10.*

Every word which Barry spoke in this the greatest character of the greatest poet, seemed to come from the heart; and I well remember that I saw Colley Cibber in the boxes on the first night of Barry's *Othello*, loudly applauding him by frequent clappings of the hands, a practice by no means usual to the old man, even when he was very well pleased with an actor.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. ii., chap. 38.*

Fox said that Barry's *Romeo* was superior to Garrick's.

'Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.'

"Sir," said he [Tate Wilkinson], "Barry, sir, was as much superior to Garrick in *Romeo*, as York Minister is to a Methodist chapel."

MICHAEL KELLY: 'Reminiscences,' *vol. ii.*, *p.* 10.

The town has found out different ways,
To praise its different *Lears*;
To Barry it gives loud huzzas,
To Garrick only tears.

A king? Ay, every inch a king—
Such Barry doth appear :
But Garrick's quite another thing ;
He's every inch *King Lear*.

RICHARD KENDAL (quoted in Dodd's 'Epigrammatists,' *p.* 410).

In Barry's personating *Lear* his figure was dignified and venerable ; his manner of speaking this celebrated imprecation was impressive ; but his voice wanted that power and flexibility which varied passion requires. His pauses and broken interruptions of speech, of which he was extremely enamored, sometimes to a degree of impropriety, were at times too inartificially repeated ; nor did he give that terror to the whole which the great poet intended should predominate.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Dramatic Miscellanies,' *vol. ii.*, *chap.* 31.

Spranger Barry died Jan. 10 [1777] ; he was unquestionably the most pleasing actor that ever trod the

stage for many years as a Hero or a Lover ; he gave dignity to the one and passion to the other. There was never perhaps an actor who was so much indebted to nature as was Barry ; his person was noble and commanding, his action graceful and correct, his features regular, expressive and handsome ; his countenance naturally open, placid, and benevolent, yet easily worked to the indication of haughtiness and contempt, but in the softer expressions of tender and feeling emotions he principally excelled ; his voice was finely calculated to aid his appearance ; it had melody, depth, and strength ; there was a burst of grief in it which was peculiar to himself. . . . In point of judgment he seems to have been miserably inferior to Garrick, and his failure in this respect gave Churchill a handle for the many severe things he said of him—lately his increasing infirmities diminished much from his former excellence, but even the dregs of his acting were respectable.

P. GENEST: 'History of the Stage,' vol. v., pp. 570-571.

What aspirant entering on a struggle of a similar nature now would be gratified with such notice as the press in the *General Advertiser*, awarded to the new actor on this occasion ? "Barry performed *Othello* before a numerous and polite audience, and met with as great applause as could be expected." And the triumph *was* as great as the player could have hoped for. In some things Barry profited by the suggestions and teaching of Macklin ; and the fact that for nearly eighty nights, about half of which were given to *Othello*, *Lord Townly* and *Macbeth*, Barry drew

crowded houses, will show that a new and dangerous rival had sprung up in Garrick's path.

DR. DORAN : 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. i., chap. 26.*

His gradual preparation for the volcanic burst of "I'll tear her all to pieces," and the burst itself, in its exquisite agony, as well as power, surpassed the grandest of the effects which the stage in those days saw so frequently. You could observe the muscles stiffening, the veins distending, and the red blood boiling through his dark skin—a mighty flood of passion accumulating for several minutes—and at length bearing down its barriers, and sweeping onward in thunder, love, reason, mercy, all before it. The females at this point used invariably to shriek, whilst those with stouter nerves grew uproarious in admiration; for my own part I remember that the thrill it gave me took away my sleep the entire night. The very antithesis of this was the manner in which he gave the words, "Oh, *Desdemona*—way—away—away!" Instead of blustering them out as I have mostly seen done by a gentleman with a bosom of adamant and lungs of leather, he looked a few seconds in *Desdemona's* face, as if to read her feelings and disapprove his suspicions; then, turning away, as the adverse conviction gathered in his heart, he spoke them falteringly and gushed into tears. . . . The following anecdote records the greatest compliment, I conceive, which that genuine criterion of nature, sympathy, ever paid to public genius. When Barry had finished his address to the senators, three rounds of applause spoke the feelings of the house; and when the *Duke*, in comment on his apology,

observed, "I think this tale would win my daughter, too!" the audience sympathized so truly with the feelings of the speaker, that their hands by spontaneous effect came again together, as their hearts had done before, and the applause went round a fourth time in echo of his sentiment.

JOHN BERNARD: 'Retrospections of the Stage,'
vol. i., chap. i.

Though Barry eschewed that deep study and patient care which enabled Garrick to bring his gifts to maturity, yet by reason of his great sensibility and natural tact he was perhaps the more effective player. Barry felt the force and pathos of every line he spoke; Garrick could, on leaving an audience bathed in tears, make jokes at the wings which convulsed his hearers with laughter. The whole town was enthusiastic concerning this new actor. Garrick freely acknowledged him "the best lover upon the stage;" whilst Davies adds his opinion, that "in scenes of love, tenderness, and all the mingled passions of the soul, he was not inferior to the Montford." Amongst those who witnessed him play *Othello* on the night of his first appearance at Drury Lane was old Colley Cibber, who afterwards went about declaring that this young man's *Othello* was superior to the immortal Betterton's, and no higher meed of praise could he bestow. . . . In some other personations he was almost, if not equally, successful. Garrick having once seen him play *Orestes* never afterwards attempted that part in London. His *Alexander* was pronounced inimitable, and his *Romeo* the perfection of love-making. In most of the characters he personated he was indeed successful. . . .

In private life he was scarcely less lauded than in public. He was caressed for his beauty by women of quality, sought after for his conviviality by men of distinction, and courted for the excellency of his parts by society in general. In return, he entertained the town with a magnificence which, if suited to his elegant manners and superb tastes, far out-stripped his income.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY : 'Peg Woffington,' *vol. ii., chap. 7.*

When Barry assumed the management of the Dublin Theatre, he found Mrs. Dancer a most promising actress, and her lord the most jealous husband in Ireland. Youth, beauty, genius, were the endowments she had brought to that husband ; and he on his death left her in full possession of all she had brought with her and nothing more. But these and a liberal salary were charms that attracted many admirers. An Irish Earl was not ashamed, indeed, to woo the young, fair, and accomplished creature with too free a gallantry ; but all the Earls and all the peerage had no chance against the manly beauty and the silver tone of Spranger Barry.

Hand-in-hand with her new husband she came to London. Garrick sat in the pit, at Foote's theatre, to witness her *début*. He appeared, and forthwith she took a place at the head of her profession,—equal almost to her great namesake of the previous century, not inferior to Mrs. Pritchard or Mrs. Cibber, superior to Mrs. Yates, and not to be excelled till, in the evening of her days, Sarah Siddons came to wish her gone and to speed the going.

DR. DORAN : 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. 9.*

There was some humor in the retort of a country actor of the name of Knipe to the famous Barry, who was, like myself, impatient of the incompetency of the players of the company. "Do not speak your speech, sir, in that drawling way," said Barry in his energetic manner; "look at me, sir! speak it in this way—'To ransom home revolted *Mortimer!*'—that's the way to speak it, sir." To which the actor immediately replied, "I know that, sir—that *is* the way; but you'll please to remember you get £100 a week for speaking it in your way, and I only get thirty shillings for mine! Give me £100, and I'll speak it in your way; but I'm not going to do for thirty shillings what you get paid £100 for."

W. C. MACREADY: 'Reminiscences,' *chap.* 12, 1818-1819.

I was once asked by Spranger Barry (who knew my skill in drawing) to make his face for *Lear*. I went to his dressing-room and used my camel-hair pencil and Indian ink with, as I thought, a very venerable effect. When he came into the green-room royally dressed, asking some of the performers how he looked, Isaac Sparks, in his Lord Chief Joker way, remarked, "As you belong to the London Beef-steak Club, O'Keefe has made you peeping through a gridiron." Barry was so doubtful of his own excellence, that he used to consult the old experienced stage carpenters, at rehearsals, to give him their opinion how he acted such-and-such a passage; but used to call them aside for this purpose. This diffidence was more remarkable in Barry, who was the finest actor in his walk that has appeared on the English stage; *Alexander, Romeo,*

Jaffier!—He is buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey. The stone-cutter omitted the R in his Christian name, Spranger, which leaves it *Spanger*. This tombstone is within a few yards of the steps leading from the Abbey into the Cloisters.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. i., chap. 7.

Of the nineteen characters of which he was the original actor, these stand out more celebrated than the rest: *Mahomet*, in Johnson's 'Irene;' *Young Norval*, in 'Douglas' (in the white puckered satin suit); and *Evander*, in the 'Grecian Daughter.' The last was a masterpiece of impersonation, and Barry drew tears as copiously in this part as ever his great rival did in *King Lear*, in which, by the way, Garrick's too frequent use of his white pocket-handkerchief was looked upon by the critics as bathos, with respect to the act; and an anachronism with regard to the article.

"Were interred in a private manner, in the Cloisters Westminster, the remains of Spranger Barry, late of Covent Garden Theatre." Such is the simple farewell, a week after his death, of the public papers to *Young Douglas*, old *Evander*, the silver-toned actor. Macklin was one of the funeral procession from Cecil Street to the Cloisters. Looking into the grave he murmured "Poor Spranger," and when some one would fain have led the old man away, he said mournfully, "Sir, I am at my rehearsal. Do not disturb my reverie."

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' vol. ii., chap. 9.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

1720—1777.

By turns transform'd into all kinds of shapes,
Constant to none, Foote laughs, cries, struts, and
scrapes ;

Now in the center, now in van or rear,
The Proteus shifts, Bawd, Parson, Auctioneer.
His strokes of humor, and his bursts of sport
Are all contained in this one word, Distort.
Doth a man stutter, look a-squint, or halt ?
Mimics draw humor out of Nature's faults,
With personal defects their mirth adorn,
And hang misfortunes out to public scorn.
E'en I, whom Nature cast in hideous mould,
Whom having made she trembled to behold,
Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
And find that Nature's errors are my own.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).



SAMUEL FOOTE
As Mrs. Cole in "The Minor."

SAMUEL FOOTE.

"This," said Mr. Cook (a forgotten translator of Hesiod), when making an introduction to a circle of wits, "this is the nephew of the gentleman who was lately hung in chains for murdering his brother;" and the young man who made this startling first appearance among his peers soon came forward as an author with an authentic account of the crime—a grim first book for a humorist. The nephew of the murderer and the murdered man was Samuel Foote, a scion of a good family, born at Truro in 1720, educated at Worcester and afterward at Oxford. When he printed the last dying speech of his wicked uncle he was just twenty-one, and he had just run through his first fortune, as he was afterward to run through two more. It was need which led him to take to the stage, as other ruined gentlemen, a generation before, had taken to the road. At the Haymarket Theatre, Feb. 6, 1744, he made his first appearance as *Othello*, "new dressed after the custom of the country." He failed, as might have been expected, as failed also in this trying character, a friend of his—David Garrick. Then Foote tried *Lord Foppington* in the 'Relapse,' which he acted more successfully, having had hints from Colley Cibber. The next winter he went over to Dublin and acted at the Smock Alley Theatre, then

newly opened by Thomas Sheridan. In another year he was at Drury Lane, appearing in half a dozen of the leading characters of contemporary comedy. Of these he made a distinct hit only in *Bayes*, the poetic hero of the 'Rehearsal,' now forgotten because it has been superseded by the kindred and more brilliant 'Critic.' *Bayes* was originally a caricature of Dryden; Garrick had been the first to use it as a vehicle for imitations of his fellow-comedians and tragedians. Garrick was a good mimic and the greatest of actors; Foote was barely a passable actor, but he was one of the greatest of mimics. The signal success of his *Bayes* showed Foote wherein his real strength lay, and thereafter—save for a rash experiment on *Shylock* and a few incursions into comedy, of which *Fondlewife* in Congreve's 'Old Bachelor' was the best—he devoted himself to mimicry. It was not a mere monkey-trick, the photographic reproduction of a negative observer; it was the imaginative representation of a true satirist. Behind his brilliant buffoonery there was often to be seen a strong moral purpose and a willingness not only to hit folly as it flies, but also to put vice in the pillory. He began modestly with a sketch of the clubs of wits to which he had had so startling an introduction. In April, 1747, the public were invited to the Haymarket to hear "a Concert of Music, with which will be given gratis"—this was a device to get over the monopoly of the patent houses—"a new entertainment called the 'Diversions of the Morning,' to which will be added a farce taken from the 'Old Bachelor' called the 'Credulous Husband,' *Fondlewife* by Mr. Foote; with an epilogue to be spoken by the B[e]d[for]d Coffee House." The patentees protested,

and then Foote invited the public "to come and drink a dish of chocolate with him; and he hoped there will be a great deal of Comedy and some joyous spirits; he will endeavor to make the Morning as Diverting as possible." The hour was twelve noon, and so amusing was the entertainment he offered that he soon transferred it to the evening:—"Mr. Foote's friends are desired to drink a dish of tea with him at half an hour past 6 in the evening." After acting a while at Covent Garden, he went back to the Haymarket the next year (1748), and varied the 'Diversions of a Morning' with an 'Auction of Pictures.' Parts of these entertainments were incorporated in his comedy 'Taste,' acted in 1752. In time the 'Auction' was followed by the first of Foote's published plays, the 'Knights' (1748), still straggling enough in construction, but apparently far more regular than either of its predecessors. In the next twenty years Foote produced a score of plays, farcical comedies all of them, only one of which, the 'Liar,' is known to the play-goer of the present. In every one of these satirical pieces Foote played the chief part, or parts, for sometimes he provided himself with two characters in one comedy. And in all of them, without exception, the characters which Foote acted were taken from life and were recognized at once as portraits. It was this bold personality of his dramatic satire which led some one to call Foote the British Aristophanes:—and if we can forget, for a moment, that Aristophanes was one of the foremost of lyric poets, we must confess that there is a measure of justice in the name. As Mr. Forster justly remarks, Foote was like Aristophanes "in wit, whim, ready humor, practical jokes, keen

sarcasm, vivid personation, and above all in the unflinching audacity with which he employed all these in scorn and ridicule of living vices and hypocrisies." It is this abundance of local color and of contemporary allusion, which helped to recommend his plays when they were served up piping hot, and which, now that they are cold, makes them unactable and almost unreadable: in art, whatever is contemporary is three parts temporary. Thus it is that the 'Englishman in Paris' (1753), the 'Englishman returned from Paris' (1756), the 'Author' (1758), and the 'Minor' (1760) have faded out of sight of all but persistent students of the stage. The 'Liar' (1761), an adaptation of Steele's 'Lying Lover' (which was an adaptation of Corneille's 'Menteur,' and this in turn was an adaptation of Alarçon's 'Verdad Suspiciosa,') still keeps the stage in the brisk version of it prepared for his own use by the late Charles James Mathews; and the 'Mayor of Garrett' (1763) kept the stage well into this century, although it is now no longer seen. These are perhaps the best of his plays, having been built with more solidity of structure than most of the others. In general, Foote as a dramatist, was hurried and careless; he was content to sketch a character in outline, and to rely on his own powers as a mimic to give it body. His was a sort of journalist-drama in some respects, not unlike M. Sardou's in our day; one can tell the date of a play by the allusions in it; and when its personalities are stale, the play is flat and unprofitable. In the 'Minor,' for example, Foote played at Whitfield; in the 'Orators' (1762) he took off Faulkner, the Dublin printer; in the 'Maid of Bath' (1771) he attacked the elderly admirer of the beautiful Miss

Linley, who was soon to become Mrs. Richard Brinsley Sheridan ; and in the 'Cozeners' (1774) he satirized a certain Dr. Dodd, then a fashionable clergyman and afterward hanged for forgery.

Not long after acting in the 'Commissary' (1765) Foote went with the Duke of York, the king's brother, on a visit to Lord Mexborough's, and, while hunting, he was thrown and so severely hurt that his left leg had to be cut off. For a little time it seemed as though his career was over ; but at last he revived up and regained courage. The Duke of York got him a formal patent for the Haymarket Theatre, and, no longer in dread of the managers of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, Foote rebuilt his little theatre, and in May, 1767, opened it with a prelude from his own pen. For nine years he kept the Haymarket open every summer, relying on himself as actor and as author, to provide the best of the fare he set before his customers. His pen was as sharp as his tongue and, as Davies records, he was the best feared man in all England. Sometimes he attacked wantonly and in sheer enjoyment of his skill in fence ; more often, perhaps, he chose as his target some one whose follies or whose vices might make a fair mark. In the 'Trip to Calais' he made bold to tear the mask from the infamous Duchess of Kingston. The Duchess was a hard hitter ; she got the play refused a license ; she tried to bribe and then to bully Foote ; she was vindictive and unscrupulous ; and she hesitated on no accusation however gross or false, which might break Foote down. He modified the 'Trip to Calais' into the 'Capuchin' (1776) and scarified one of her vile tools, a Dr. Jackson. But the struggle had been bitter and the wounds

inflicted on Foote were deep and rankling. He sold his theatre to George Colman for an annuity of £1600—and lived to receive only one payment. He acted, for the last time, at the Haymarket, in May, 1777, in his own 'Devil upon Two Sticks,' (originally produced in 1768). In the Autumn he set out for France, but he died at Dover, Oct. 21, 1777.

A comedian of any great merit Foote was not, or a comic wriiter of the first rank. As an actor he was little more than a mimic, and as a comic author he was but a careless wit. Indeed it is not an actor or author that Foote's name survives to our time ; it is his witticisms which have kept his memory in the minds of men. He is remembered now not as the mimic who was able even to take himself off or as the author of the 'Liar,' but as the utterer of many a merry jest, the edge and the sparkle of which Time has not yet dulled. His jibes were pointed—and, not infrequently, there was poison on the point. He spared neither foe nor friend : he was forever girding at Garrick, whom he seems to have liked and respected and to whom he was under obligation. He was about to put Dr. Johnson into the 'Orators' when the sturdy critic bought himself a stout stick : yet Johnson, although he had no respect for Foote, was captured by his all-conquering humor when at last they met ; he said, "Foote is the most irrepressible fellow that I ever knew : when you have driven him into a corner, and think you are sure of him, he runs through between your legs, or jumps over your head, and makes his escape." Garrick called him "a man of wonderful abilities, and the most entertaining companion I have ever known ;" and Tate Wilkinson, whom he had taught and brought out,

and who used to mimic him as he mimicked others, declared that "if ever one person possessed the talents of pleasing more than another, Mr. Foote was the man." Yet, like Theodore Hook, two generations later, he was more dreaded than liked. His life was misspent, and its history is even more melancholy than the life of a humorist is wont to be.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

This ['Diversions of a Morning'] consisted of the introduction of several characters in real life, then well known, whose manner of conversation and expression he very ludicrously hit-off in the diction of his drama, and further represented by an imitation, not only of their tones of voice, but even of their very persons. An entertainment of this sort met at first with every degree of success that the most sanguine could wish to expect. The audience saw a species of performance quite novel to the stage, brought forward and supported by a young man, independent of any other auxiliary than the fertility of his own pen, and his own power of performance; while the author, feeling himself bold in his support, beheld his future fortunes opening before him. He soon found, however, that he reckoned without his host; for, whether from the alarm excited in the Theatre Royal, or the resentment of most of the performers who smarted under the lash of his mimicry, the civil magistrates of Westminster were called upon to interfere, and under the sanction of the act of Parliament for limiting a number of play-houses, opposed to *Bayes's* new raised

troops, a *posse* of constables, who, entering the theatre in magisterial array, dismissed the audience, and left the laughing Aristophanes to consider of new ways and means for his support.

WILLIAM COOKE : 'Memoirs of Samuel Foote,' *vol. i.*

Foote, an admirable but a most mischievous writer, who emulated Aristophanes with less genius and less feeling, who seemed fondly to fancy that to torture individuals was the only way to delight their fellow-creatures, measuring their pleasure by his malignity, who knew no quality of satire but personality, who would sacrifice his best friend for the gratification of tormenting him, and who, after all, was perpetually the cat's-paw to his own vanity, created among the fastidious, the sour, and the heart-burnt, a sort of veneration for that exotic from Greece, the middle comedy, which, greatly to the honor of the manly and benevolent character of the English, may have a dwindling and a rickety existence, but can never flourish to maturity in this country.

CHARLES DIBDIN : 'History of the Stage,' *book ix., chap. 7.*

Mr. Foote, after he had successively presented his whimsical exhibitions, under the title of 'Giving Tea,' at the unusual time of twelve o'clock at noon, in the little theatre in the Haymarket, began to apply himself to the writing of farces, or short comedies of two acts. . . . These were some of his introductory pieces to many others more regular and permanent. Before he obtained the royal patent for acting plays in the theatre in the Haymarket, he frequently acted his

pieces at Drury Lane, in the beginning of the winter. Sometimes he ventured upon some important parts in old comedies, such as *Fondlewife* in the 'Old Bachelor,' *Sir Paul Pliant* in the 'Double Dealer,' and *Ben* in 'Love for Love.' His intimacy with people of the first rank contributed to support him in his feeble attempts upon the masterly characters of Congreve; and it will scarce be credited that for three nights the boxes were crowded to see Foote murder the part of *Ben*; for his acting bore no resemblance to nature and character. He was even destitute of what no man could suppose him to want, a proper confidence in his own abilities; for sure his *Ben* was as unenterprising a lump of insipidity as ever a patient audience was presented with; it was not even a lively mistake of humor. In his *Fondlewife* he had luckily remembered that great master of acting, Colley Cibber. In the course of the first scene, he drew the attention of the audience, and merited and gained much applause; but, in the progress of the part, he forgot his exemplar, and degenerated into buffoonery. His *Sir Paul Pliant* was worse, if possible, than his *Ben*; for fear restrained him from being outrageous in the sailor; but in the knight he gave loose to the most ridiculous burlesque and vilest grimace. However, the people laughed heartily, and that he thought was a full approbation of his grotesque performance. In short, Foote was a most despicable player in almost all parts but those which he wrote for himself.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. i., chap. 18.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry

Andrew, a buffoon!" JOHNSON: "But he has wit, too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES: "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON: "The first time I was in company with Foote, was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased: and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him; but the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather

a favorite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.'

JAMES BOSWELL: 'Life of Johnson,' 1776, *æt.* 67.

Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage; expecting great profits from the ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's, the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick;" and being answered sixpence, "Why then, sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

Ibid., 1775, *æt.* 66.

BOSWELL: "Foote has a great deal of humor."
JOHNSON: "Yes, sir." BOSWELL: "He has a singular talent of exhibiting character." JOHNSON: "Sir, it is not a talent—it is a vice; it is what others abstain from. It is not comedy, which exhibits the character of a species, as that of a miser gathered from many misers: it is farce, which exhibits individuals." BOSWELL: "Did not he think of exhibiting you, sir?" JOHNSON: "Sir, fear restrained him; he knew I would have broken his bones. I would have saved him the trouble of cutting off a leg; I would not have left him a leg to cut off." BOSWELL: "Pray, sir, is not Foote an infidel?" JOHNSON: "I do not know, sir, that the fellow is an infidel; but if he be an infidel, he is an infidel as a dog is an infidel; that is to say, he has never thought upon the subject."* BOSWELL: "I suppose, sir, he has thought superficially, and seized the first notions which occurred to his mind." JOHNSON: "Why then, sir, still he is like a dog, that snatches the piece next him. Did you never observe that dogs have not the power of comparing? A dog will take a small bit of meat as readily as a large, when both are before him."

Ibid., 1769, *æt.* 60.

* When Mr. Foote was at Edinburgh, he thought fit to entertain a numerous Scotch company, with a great deal of coarse jocularity, at the expense of Dr. Johnson, imagining it would be acceptable. I felt this as not civil to me; but sat very patiently till he had exhausted his merriment on that subject; and then observed, that surely Johnson must be allowed to have some sterling wit, and that I had heard him say a very good thing of Mr. Foote himself. "Ah, my old friend Sam," cried Foote, "no man says better things: do let us have it." Upon which I told the above story, which produced a very loud laugh from the company. But I never saw Foote so disconcerted. He looked grave and angry, and entered into a serious refutation of the remark. "What, sir," said he, "talk thus of a man of liberal education—a man who for years was at the University of Oxford—a man who has added sixteen new characters to the English drama of this country!"—BOSWELL.

Foote went to Ireland and took off F[aulkner]—the celebrated Dublin printer. F[aulkner] stood the jest for some time, but found at last that Foote's imitations became so popular, and drew such attention to himself, that he could not walk the streets without being pointed at. He bethought himself of a remedy. Collecting a number of boys, he gave them a hearty meal and a shilling each for a place in the gallery and promised them another meal on the morrow if they would hiss off the scoundrel who turned him into ridicule. The injured man learnt from his friends that Foote was received that night better than ever. Nevertheless in the morning the ragged troupe of boys appeared to demand their recompense, and when the printer reproached them for their treachery their spokesman said, "Please yer honor, we did all we could, for the actor-man had heard of us, and did not come on at all. And so we had nobody to hiss. But when we saw yer honor's own dear self come on, we did clap, indeed we did, and showed you all the respect and honor in our power. And so yer honor won't forget us because yer honor's enemy was afraid to come, and left yer honor to yer own dear self."

HENRY CRABB ROBINSON: 'Reminiscences,' *vol. i., chap. 14*, Oct. 15, 1811.

Foote was in Dublin at Christmas, but he told the manager he was ill, and could not play; this was in the greenroom, when some of the performers, men and women, remarked, "Ah, sir! if you will not play, we shall have no Christmas dinner." "Ha!" said he, "if my playing gives you a Christmas dinner, play I will!" and he did so. With all his high comic humor, one

could not help pitying him sometimes, as he stood upon his one leg, leaning against the wall, whilst his servant was putting on his stage false leg, with shoe and stocking, and fastening it to the stump; he looked sorrowful, but instantly resuming all his high comic humor and mirth, hobbled forward, entered the scene, and gave the audience what they expected—their plenty of laugh and delight. Foote's great hobby was to tell stories, jest and anecdote, etc., and be surrounded by laughers; their laugh was the fuel, that not supplied his fire soon became dull; but he certainly was most powerful in exciting laughter. . . . He had a wink and a smile with one corner of his mouth, a harsh voice except when mimicking.

JOHN O'KEEFE : 'Recollections,' *vol i., chap. 8.*

Dear Sam,—I am in prison for debt; come and assist your loving mother,
E. FOOTE.

Dear Mother,—So am I; which prevents his duty being paid to his loving mother, by her affectionate son,
SAM. FOOTE.

P. S.—I have sent my attorney to assist you; in the meantime let us hope for better days.

WILLIAM COOKE : 'Memoirs of Samuel Foote,' *vol. ii., p. 4, (note).*

Foote's earliest notices of me were far from flattering; but though they had none of Goldsmith's tenderness, they had none of Johnson's ferocity; and when he accosted me with his usual salutation of "Blow your nose, child," there was a whimsical manner and a broad grin upon his features which always made me laugh.

The paradoxical celebrity he maintained upon the stage was very singular ;—his satirical sketches were scarcely dramas, and he could not be called a legitimate performer. Yet there is no Shakspeare or Roscius upon record who, like Foote, supported a theatre for a series of years by his own acting, in his own writings, and for ten years of the time upon a *wooden leg* !

This prop to his person I once saw standing by his bedside, ready dressed in a handsome silk stocking, with a polished shoe and gold buckle, awaiting the owner's getting up. It had a kind of tragi-comical appearance ; and I leave to inveterate wags the ingenuity of punning upon a Foote in bed and a leg out of it.

GEORGE COLMAN, the Younger : 'Random Records,' *vol. i., chap. 4.*

The strength and predominance of Foote's humor lay in its readiness. Whatever the call that might be made upon it, there it was. Other men were humorous as the occasion arose to them, but to him the occasion was never wanting. Others might be foiled or disabled by the lucky stroke of an adversary, but he took only the quicker rebound from what would have laid them prostrate. To put him out, or place him at a disadvantage, was not possible. He was taken one day into White's Club by a friend who wanted to write a note. Standing in a room among strangers, and men he had no agreement with in politics, he appeared to feel not quite at ease ; when Lord Carmarthen, wishing to relieve his embarrassment, went up to speak to him ; but, himself feeling rather shy, merely

said, "Mr. Foote, your handkerchief is hanging out of your pocket." Whereupon Foote, looking round suspiciously and hurriedly thrusting the handkerchief back into his pocket, replied, "Thank you, my Lord, thank you ; you know the company better than I do." At one of Macklin's absurd Lectures on the Ancients, the lecturer was solemnly composing himself to begin when a buzz of laughter from where Foote stood ran through the room, and Macklin, thinking to throw the laughter off his guard, and effectually from that night disarm his ridicule, turned to him with this question, in his most severe and pompous manner, "Well, sir, you seem to be very merry there, and do you know what I am going to say now?" "No, sir," at once replied Foote ; "*pray do you ?*" One night at his friend Delaval's, when the glass had been circulating freely, one of the party would suddenly have fixed a quarrel on him for his indulgence of personal satire. "Why, what would you have?" exclaimed Foote, good-humoredly putting it aside ; "of course I take all my friends off, but I use them no worse than myself ; I take myself off." "Gadso !" cried the malcontent, "that I should like to see ;" upon which Foote took up his hat and left the room.

JOHN FORSTER : 'Biographical Essays ;' Samuel Foote, 3d ed., p. 335.

On going into the kitchen to order a particular dish for dinner, the cook, understanding that he was about to embark for France, began to say that, for her part, she was never out of her own country. "Why, Cookey," said Foote, "that's very extraordinary, as they tell me above stairs you have been several times all over

Grease!"—"They may say what they please," replied the cook, "but I was never ten miles from Dover in all my life."—"Nay," said Foote, "that must be a fib, for I have seen you myself at Spithead:" a sally which amused all the servants in the kitchen, in whose laughter he heartily joined, and gave them a crown to drink his health and a good voyage.

JOHN GALT: 'Lives of the Players,' *vol. i., s. v., Foote.*

That Garrick was not absolutely a mean or illiberal man, there is nevertheless abundant proof; but he began the world, as Johnson expresses it, with a great hunger for money, and what at the outset of life was a commendable feeling in him, became in later life a habit of which he could not always divest himself, and which exposed very often to undeserved derision, a really kind and open nature. In the main, however, the impression derived from the great run of Foote's jokes on this subject, is rather friendly and even cordial than otherwise. "There is a witty satirical story of Foote," says Johnson. "He had a small bust of Garrick placed upon his bureau. 'You may be surprised,' said he, 'that I allowed him to be so near my gold;—but you will observe he has no hands?'" The joke is a good one, but a man would hardly so place an object displeasing to him that his eye would have to rest upon daily and hourly, for the sake of making fifty jokes infinitely better; and the sarcasm is less worthy remembering than the friendly goodwill lurking under it. Another story is told of a somewhat pompous announcement, at one of Foote's dinner-parties when the Drury Lane manager was among the guests, of the arrival of "Mr. Garrick's servants;"

whereupon, "Oh, let them wait," cried the wit, adding, in an affected undertone to his own servant, but sufficiently loud to be generally heard; "but, James, be sure you lock up the pantry." A third, which continued to exhibit them in cordial intercourse, is of their leaving the Bedford together one night, when Foote had been the entertainer, and on his pulling out his purse to pay the bill, a guinea had dropped. Impatient at not immediately finding it, "where on earth can it be gone to?" he said. "Gone to the devil, I think," rejoined Garrick, who also had been seeking for it everywhere. "Well said, David," cried Foote, "let you alone for making a guinea go farther than anybody else."

JOHN FORSTER: 'Biographical Essays;' Samuel Foote, 3d ed., pp. 370-1.

Fox told me that Lord William Bentinck once invited Foote to meet him and some others at dinner in St. James's Street; and that they were rather angry at Lord William for having done so, expecting that Foote would prove only a bore, and a check on their conversation. "But," said Fox, "we soon found that we were mistaken; whatever we talked about—whether fox-hunting, the turf, or any other subject—Foote instantly took the lead, and delighted us all."

'Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.'

He reached Dover on his way to France on Oct. 20, 1777, attended by one servant. He had suffered much fatigue on the journey, and next morning at breakfast was seized with a shivering fit, under which he sank in three hours. Jewel had at once been sent for, and arrived only to take charge of the body for removal to

London. But, before he left Dover, he wished to leave some memorial there of the death of a man so celebrated; and this faithful servant and treasurer, who had been for years in attendance on him, who knew all his weaknesses, all his foibles, all that most intimately reveals a man's nature in the hard money business of the world, could think of nothing more appropriate for his epitaph in the church of Saint Mary than to express how liberal he was in spending what too many use all their care to keep, and he therefore ordered to be cut upon the marble nothing about his humor or his genius, about his writing, or his acting, but that he had a hand

Open as day for melting charity.

And so we may leave him. He lies in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, without any memorial either in stone or marble.

JOHN FORSTER: 'Biographical Essays;' Samuel Foote, 3d ed., p. 462.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

1721—1788.

Just his conceptions, natural and great ;
 His feelings strong, his words enforc'd with weight
 Was speech-fam'd Quin himself to hear him speak,
 Envy would drive the color from his cheek ;
 But step-dame Nature, niggard of her grace,
 Deny'd the social pow'rs of voice and face,
 Fix'd in one frame of features, glare of eye,
 Passions, like chaos, in confusion lie ;
 In vain the wonders of his skill are try'd
 To form distinction Nature hath deny'd.
 His voice no touch of harmony admits,
 Irregularly deep, and shrill by fits ;
 The two extremes appear like man and wife,
 Coupled together for the sake of strife.

His action's always strong, but sometimes such
 That Candor must declare he acts too much.
 Why must impatience fall three paces back ?
 Why paces three return to the attack ?
 Why is the right leg too forbid to stir,
 Unless emotion's semicircular ?
 Why must the hero with the nailor vie,
 And hurl the close-clenched fist at nose or eye ?
 In royal *John*, with *Philip* angry grown,
 I thought he would have knocked poor Davies down
 Inhuman tyrant ! was it not a shame,
 To fright a king so harmless and so tame ?
 But, spite of all defects, his glories rise ;
 And Art, by judgment form'd, with Nature vies.
 Behold him sound the depths of *Hubert's* soul,
 Whilst in his own contending passions roll.
 View the whole scene, with critic judgment scan,
 And then deny him Merit if you can.
 Where he falls short, 'tis Nature's fault alone ;
 Where he succeeds, the Merit's all his own.
 CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).



THOMAS SHERIDAN
As Cato.

THOMAS SHERIDAN.

Thomas Sheridan, the son of Dean Swift's crony and correspondent, was born at Quilca, near Dublin, in 1721. He was educated at Westminster school and afterward at Trinity College, Dublin. His father was wont to have a Greek play acted every year by the head class; and it may have been this which turned Sheridan's thoughts to the theatre. He made his first appearance on the stage as *Richard III.* in January, 1743, at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin. The next year he played at Covent Garden, and the year after with Garrick at Drury Lane. Then he returned to Dublin and became the manager of the theatre there, behaving with courage and dignity during the riots which the turbulence of the time made far too frequent. In 1747 he was married to Miss Frances Chamberlaine, who had come forward in the press to defend him against unjust attack. She was a woman of fine character and of unusual attainments; she wrote a novel, 'Sidney Biddulph' (which was very popular and which Dr. Johnson praised highly), and a play, the 'Discovery' (which Garrick accepted and acted). Sheridan's temper seems to have been touchy at times; Garrick was his early rival as an actor and Johnson was his later rival as a lexicographer; but when he fell out with them, they both retained their regard for Mrs. Sheridan. For ten years and more

Sheridan, in the management of the Dublin theatre, struggled bravely against misfortune : then he went to England and began to lecture before the English universities on oratory and elocution. In 1758 Oxford made him a Master of Arts, and the next year Cambridge followed this example. In 1760 he acted again at Drury Lane ; and again he and Garrick disagreed. He continued to appear on the stage from time to time until 1776, when his son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, then not twenty-five years of age, but already famous as the author of the ' Rivals ' and the ' Duenna,' bought Garrick's interest in Drury Lane, and installed Thomas Sheridan as the " Manager "—an important but subordinate position in which were combined certain of the duties of both the Acting- and the Stage-manager of our day. For three years he retained this post.

Sheridan had published a discourse on ' British Education ' in 1756 and his ' Lectures on Elocution ' in 1762. After leaving the theatre, he brought forth in 1780 his ' General Dictionary of the English Language, one main object of which is to establish a Standard of Pronunciation.' In 1784 he published a life of Swift ; and he edited Swift's works in seventeen volumes. In February, 1785, Sheridan and John Henderson began a series of readings at Freemason's Hall, which was " attractive beyond parallel " as the " grand room of that building literally overflowed on those nights." Boaden says that Sheridan's " reading, though harsh, was remarkably accurate, and exemplified his theory in emphasis and pronunciation. The greatest compliment that he ever received was the attention of the late minister, Mr. Pitt. That most admirable orator had, in his youth adopted the system of Sheridan, and

followed him when many others left him." Boaden also declares that "in poetry I consider him to have made more of the 'Alexander's Feast' and the famous 'Elegy' of Gray, than even very attentive readers could have discovered." When John Philip Kemble was going to play *King John*, Sheridan read the part to him, "very finely," so Kemble said; and he was helpful to Mrs. Siddons, giving her the benefit of his advice, on which she was ready to rely. He died in 1788 at Margate, just when he was preparing for a journey to Lisbon.

"Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but the weak flavor of genius in a person essentially common is detestable," so the Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table tells us; and although Thomas Sheridan cannot fairly be called a person essentially common, yet it is not to be denied that he had but a weak flavor of genius. As an actor his aspiration was greater than his inspiration. He was a scholarly actor—which is almost a term of reproach, since it seems to imply a dearth of the vivifying flame. Boaden deprecating his pretence of rivalry with Garrick, called him "an accurate, a sensible, and a very manly actor," but "his voice was too harsh, and his expression too dull, to allow of any near approach to the most brilliant actor that perhaps ever lived." Although he had adapted a farce from the French, he was lacking in a sense of humor, and when he played *Romeo* he calmly robbed *Mercutio* of the Queen Mab speech; an unconceivable blunder and an unpardonable sin—but not very much more foolish or more heinous than a custom which obtains to the present day of transferring to the melancholy *Jaques* the compassionate lines about the wounded deer.

Sheridan was upright and honorable, good-natured and kind-hearted: it was in the dresses of *Lady Macbeth* and *Juliet* which he had lent them from the theatre that the two beautiful Miss Gunnings were presented at the Castle; and it was in defence of another beauty, the fair and frail George Anne Bellamy that he risked his property and his life during what was known as Kelly's riot. But his temper was uncertain; it was a long while before he forgave his son for his marriage; and in the beginning of his career he had a violent dispute with Theophilus Cibber (see 'Cibber and Sheridan; or the Dublin Miscellany,' 1743), in which Sheridan acted like a dignified gentleman and Cibber acted like himself: as Dr. Johnson said of Wilkes so may we say of Theophilus Cibber—"Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill of him of whom no man speaks well."

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

His appearance on the boards of Smock Alley Theatre on January 29, 1743, in the character of *Richard III.* caused considerable sensation in the town. He was in the twenty-third year of his age; his appearance was handsome, his voice mellow and expressive, and his *début* was a decided success. He next played *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Cato*, and *Brutus*, and his acting gained so rapidly on the town that he became the rage; his name was on all men's lips.

FITZGERALD MOLLOY: 'Peg Woffington,' vol. i., chap. 9.

Mr. Sheridan was, by continual solicitation of the manager, prevailed upon at last to take the part of *King John*; and in this compliance, I think, he gained great advantage to himself; the deep tones of his voice, and the vehemence of his action, were well adapted to the turbulent and gloomy passions of *John*. In the scene with *Hubert* in the third act, his representation of the anxiety and distress of a mind which labors to disclose, and is afraid to discover a secret big with death and horror, was expressed with the feelings of one who is a master of the human passions. That accurate observer of the player's deficiencies, Churchill, would not withhold his approbation of Sheridan's action in *King John*, though in his panegyric he threw some ludicrous strokes on his excesses in look and action. The play was acted several nights, and was honored with the king's command. Sheridan's success in *King John* heightened Garrick's jealousy, especially when he was informed by a very intimate acquaintance that the king was uncommonly pleased with that actor's representation of the part.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. i., chap. 26.

A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan; Johnson, who as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed: "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine!" Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan without telling him what followed, which was that after a pause he added: "However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very

good man." Sheridan could never forgive this hasty, contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. . . . This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings, for Sheridan's well informed, animated and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate, and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man.

JAMES BOSWELL: 'Life of Johnson,' 1763, *æt.* 54.

Talking of a barrister who had a bad utterance, some one (to rouse Johnson) wickedly said that he was unfortunate in not having been taught oratory by Sheridan. JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, if he had been taught by Sheridan, he would have cleared the room." GARRICK: "Sheridan has too much vanity to be a good man." We shall now see Johnson's mode of *defending* a man; taking him into his own hands and discriminating. JOHNSON: "No, sir. There is, to be sure, in Sheridan something to reprehend and everything to laugh at; but, sir, he is not a bad man. No, sir; were mankind to be divided into good and bad, he would stand considerably within the ranks of good. And, sir, it must be allowed that Sheridan excels in plain declamation, though he can exhibit no character."

Ibid., 1769, *æt.* 60.

He laughed heartily when I mentioned to him a saying of his concerning Mr. Thomas Sheridan, which Foote took a wicked pleasure to circulate. "Why, sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity is not in nature." "So," said he, "I allowed him all his own merit." He now added, "Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, 'What do you mean to teach?' Besides, sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover to show light at Calais."

Ibid., 1763, *æt.* 54.

He observed that his old friend, Mr. Sheridan, had been honored with extraordinary attention in his own country by having had an exception made in his favor in an Irish act of Parliament concerning insolvent debtors. "Thus to be singled out," said he, "by a legislature as an object of public consideration and kindness is a proof of no common merit."

Ibid., 1779, *æt.* 70.

When Thomas Sheridan was at his zenith in Dublin, Layfield was in high estimation as an actor also. His distinguished parts were *Ventidius*, *Iago*, *Cassius*, *Syphax*, and *Apemantus*. One night, doing *Iago* (Sheridan the *Othello*), Layfield came out with:—

"Oh, my lord! beware of jealousy,
It is a green-eyed *Lobster*."

After this the play could go no further. He was at

that moment struck with incurable madness, and died somewhat in the manner of Nat. Lee, the fine tragic poet. The above "green-eyed lobster" was the first instance poor Layfield gave of this dreadful visitation.

Sheridan was one day told a gentleman wanted to speak to him; a stranger entered, seemingly much agitated, saying, "My dear sir, I have a thousand pardons to ask you, and hope for your forgiveness." "Sir," said Sheridan, "I have not the pleasure of knowing you; what is the nature of the offense given to me?" "Oh, sir! the irreparable injuries I have done to your professional reputation." "Indeed! but how?" "Oh, sir! by my persisting in writing you down in a much read popular publication" (mentioning the title). "I am sure I must have hurt your mind most exceedingly." "Hurt my mind! this is the first knowledge I ever had of the circumstance; and, as to injuring my professional reputation—here! bring the box book" (calling at the door, the box-keeper brought in the book); "there, sir, look," continued Sheridan, "I play this night; and, as you see, every box is taken by persons of the first rank and consequence in Dublin; therefore, pray comfort yourself, as to having hurt either my mind, or my reputation."

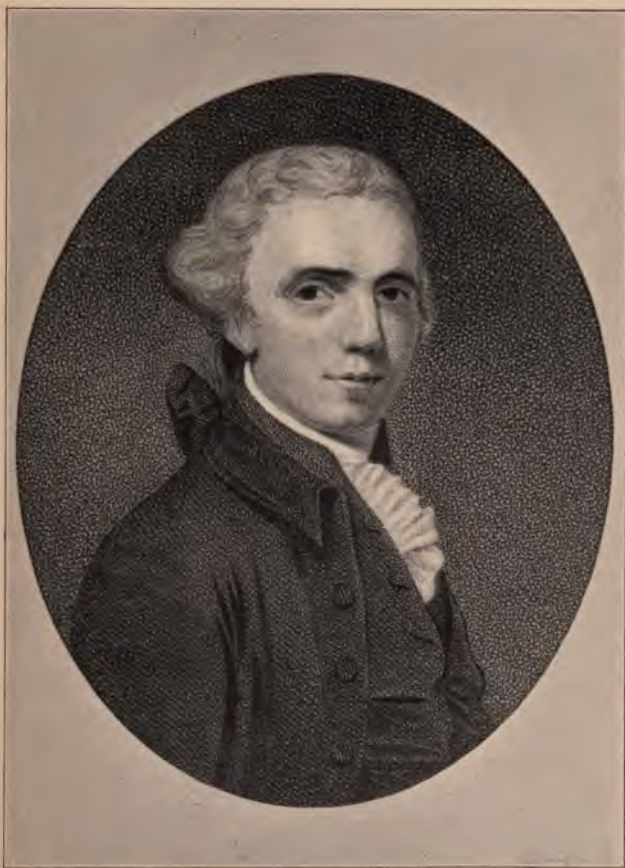
Both these circumstances happened about the year 1750, when he was manager of Smock Alley, and were told me by Sheridan himself, with many other anecdotes, when I had the happiness of his company, much to the profit of my own mind, in the years 1775 and 1776. Sheridan's best characters were *Brutus*, *Cato*, and *King John*. His manner of saying one line, "I could be merry now, *Hubert*," got him most abundant applause.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. i., chap. 11.

HENRY MOSSOP.

1729—1773.

Mossop, attach'd to military plan,
Still kept his eye fixed on his right-hand man ;
Whilst the mouth measures words with seeming skill,
The right-hand labors, and the left lies still.
For he resolv'd on scripture-grounds to go,
What the right doth, the left-hand shall not know.
With studied impropriety of speech,
He soars beyond the hackney critic's reach ;
To epithets allots emphatic state,
Whilst principals, ungrac'd, like lacquies wait ;
In ways first trodden by himself excels,
And stands alone in indeclinables ;
Conjunction, preposition, adverb, join
To stamp new vigor in the nervous line ;
In monosyllables his thunders roll,
HE, SHE, IT, and WE, YE, THEY, fright the soul.
CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*ed.* 1763).



HENRY MOSSOP.

HENRY MOSSOP.

One of the three leading tragic actors of his time, the greatest *Zanga* that ever trod the stage, the rival of Garrick in a considerable range of parts, Henry Mossop has left surprisingly little mark on dramatic history. To most people he is vaguely known as one of the most ill-fated of actors. His name is not associated with his artistic triumphs: his misfortunes were so overwhelming and so striking that the successes of the actor have been overshadowed by the sufferings of the man. Nor does it lessen the tragedy of his life that his misfortunes were directly attributable to the defects of his mental balance; and that his death, while he was yet in his prime, of a broken heart, and in abject poverty, was the logical result of a foolish and ill-regulated life.

Henry Mossop, born in the year 1729, was the son of an Irish clergyman, the Rector of Tuam. He was educated at Dublin, first at a grammar school in Digges Street, and afterwards at Trinity College, where he studied with diligence, and took his degree. On the invitation of an uncle in London, he proceeded thither to seek his fortune; but, being dissatisfied with the prospects opened to him, he turned his thoughts to the stage. Access was gained to Garrick, then manager of Drury Lane, and to John Rich, who ruled

Covent Garden ; but the young aspirant was pronounced by both these potentates to be "totally unfit for the stage." In his next endeavor to obtain an engagement, Mossop was more fortunate. His former school-fellow, Francis Gentleman, was then a member of Sheridan's company at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin ; and, through his kind offices, Mossop received an invitation from the Irish manager to appear in his theatre. This he accepted, and made his first appearance on any stage on Nov. 28, 1749. The play was Dr. Young's tragedy of the 'Revenge,' and the part of *Zanga* was announced to be sustained "by Mr. Mossop, a Gentleman of this Kingdom, who never appeared on any Stage." This character was most judiciously chosen for Mossop's first appearance. It is one of strong passion, with little subtlety of characterization, but with an abundance of striking effects ; and it is eminently suited to a young actor who has fire and passion, but whose method is unformed. This was precisely Mossop's position and he played the part with such beautiful wildness and with occasional flashes of such brilliant genius as clearly indicated his future greatness. His success was immediate, and he repeated the part on three successive nights. The next character he selected was *Richard III.*, also a judicious choice, and a success. But even thus early in his theatrical life his unfortunate disposition made itself felt and his fourth appearance on the stage was followed by a quarrel with Sheridan.

And here it is convenient to consider the peculiarity of Mossop's disposition ; because the story of his life loses much of its significance unless his actions are referred to the defects of character which prompted

them. Tate Wilkinson says that "Mr. Mossop was overburdened with a quantity of combustibles, consisting of pride, insolence, arrogance and gall;" and even Hitchcock, who is always mild, as befits a Prompter writing about Leading Ladies and Gentlemen, is fain to confess that he had "several peculiarities of disposition which rendered it not easy to live on terms of friendship with him." Mossop was one of those unfortunate beings whose vanity is their ruling principle. Such a man can be induced to commit any folly, if his conceit be judiciously stirred; and poor Mossop proved that fame, fortune, comfort, happiness, are as nothing compared with the gratification of vanity.

His first quarrel with Sheridan arose thus. Mossop dressed *Richard III.* in white satin puckered—a very eccentric costume for the Crook-back—and Sheridan casually remarked that this had a most coxcomby appearance. When Mossop heard this, he went to the manager's room and addressed him thus: "*Mr. She-ri-dan*, I hear you said I dressed Richard like a *Cox-comb*: that is an *af-front*: you wear a sword, pull it out of the *scab-bard*! I'll draw mine, and thrust it into your *bo-dy*!" Sheridan took this eccentric attack with good humor, and a reconciliation ensued, but before the end of Mossop's second season, some more serious disagreement happened, and he abruptly quitted Ireland, and engaged with Garrick at Drury Lane.

He made his first appearance in England on Sept. 26, 1751, in the part of *Richard III.*, in which he was received with great enthusiasm, and which he repeated on Sept. 27, and Oct. 1 and 5. Altogether his first season in London was most successful, and Garrick

gave him every opportunity of showing his talents to advantage, for in it he let him be seen in *Richard, Zanga*, and *Horatio* ('Fair Penitent'), frequently; in *Macbeth* and *Woisey* thrice; and in *Othello*, twice. It was a favorite complaint of Mossop's so-called friends that Garrick did all in his power to injure Mossop, and to keep him in a subordinate position to himself; but this seems to have been a calumny. It is certainly not borne out by the list of parts played by him under Garrick's management. Until the end of the season 1758-9 he remained at Drury Lane, playing every season except that of 1755-6, during which he starred in Dublin, under the management of Victor and Sowdon, at Smock Alley.

In 1759 (apparently on May 29), he made what proved to be his last appearance in England, and in 1759-60 he again went to Dublin as a star; this time to the Crow Street Theatre. Barry and Woodward were then engaged in their ruinous Dublin adventure, and had just got rid of Sheridan, whose management of Smock Alley had, owing to their opposition, collapsed. Sheridan's successor was an actor named Brown, whose competition the Crow Street managers did not fear. They were conscious that the one dangerous rival they could have was Mossop, to whom they therefore offered an engagement. As he was at this time in the enjoyment of one of his sulky fits against Garrick, he accepted their proposition, and made his first appearance at Crow Street on Oct. 31, 1759, in *Zanga*. A most brilliant season followed. The strongly contrasted styles of the two great tragedians enabled them to produce many tragedies with unprecedented completeness. Thus, Barry played

Othello to Mossop's *Iago*; *Jaffier* to his *Pierre*; *Hastings* to his *Dumont* ('Jane Shore'); and *Antony* to his *Ventidius* ('All for Love'): and in all these plays Mrs. Dancer, afterwards Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Crawford, was the heroine. No expense was spared in these productions, and Hitchcock relates with awe how the mere guards in '*Coriolanus*' cost £3 10s. per night, and the guards and chorus-singers in '*Alexander*,' £8. At the end of the season Mossop was asked to renew his engagement, and he then intimated that he intended to open the opposition house next winter. This was a terrible blow to Barry and Woodward, and they offered Mossop the most extravagant terms to remain with them, but these he haughtily rejected. Pride and love of power completely mastered his reason, and he lightly entered into a contest that ruined his opponents, and brought himself to an untimely death.

The story of Mossop's management is a tale of deplorable folly and misfortune. That it could result in anything save ruin was impossible for the keenness of the competition forced the rival managers to keep companies so expensive that Dublin was quite unable to support both. The fashionable world was divided into rival theatrical factions, Mossop's chief supporter being the Countess of Brandon. It is said however, that at her *routs* Mossop, one of whose vices was love of play, gambled away more money than her patronage brought him. Among his few theatrical successes, English opera yielded him large sums; but his general condition was chronic impecuniosity, and many stories, which are either humorous or pathetic as you choose to take them, are told of the hardships his company suffered, and the means they took to

alleviate them. It is probable that, in no season during the contest did either theatre pay its expenses; and at the end of 1761-2, Woodward retired from the struggle, leaving Barry to continue it, which he did until 1766-7, when he too had to give way. Mossop then took both theatres, and had the town to himself until Feb. 26, 1770, when a small theatre in Capel Street, which had been closed for many years, was reopened under the direction of Dawson. The manager of the larger theatres no doubt despised this small rival, but strangely enough, this opposition caused his downfall. Although Mossop had by far the better company, the public fancy followed Dawson; and the latter portion of 1769-70, and the whole of 1770-1 were ruinous to Mossop. In 1771 his health gave way under the strain and worry, and a severe illness prevented him from playing. In the same year he came over to London to make engagements for his next season, and while there he was arrested at the suit of Graham, one of his own company. Other creditors proceeded against him, and he was confined in the King's Bench till January, 1772, when he obtained his liberty by becoming bankrupt. On his release he was advised to apply to Garrick for an engagement, but his folly and pride were too strong to allow him to do this. He said that Mr. Garrick knew he was in London. The latter was probably not very anxious to have such an irreconcilable in his company, and, naturally enough, made no advances to him. Mossop then went abroad for about a year. On his return a pamphlet was published, entitled 'A Letter to David Garrick, Esq., on his conduct as principal manager and actor at Drury-Lane,' in which it was

asked—"Why is Mr. Mossop unemployed? He is the first actor now living in his extensive walk. . . . there are many of the principal plays in our language which you cannot attempt to exhibit without his performance." This pamphlet was written by a friend of Mossop's, one David Williams; but it is inconceivable how Williams could have expected to serve his friend's interest by comparing Mossop's vigor with Garrick's decay. Such a description of Garrick as this must have effectually destroyed any chance of help from him—"your mouth has no sweetness: your voice is growing hoarse and hollow; your dimples are furrows; a coarse and disgusting dewlap hangs from your chin." It is said that Mossop entered into negotiations with Covent Garden, and that he was unsuccessful in these, owing to the refusal of Mrs. Barry to act with him: but this seems apocryphal. Anyhow, he could get, or got, no employment, but wandered about in a state of great destitution. He still retained his pride, for when asked how he did, he always replied that he was better, and, to any inquiry into the state of his finances, his answer was that he wanted nothing. He died of a broken heart, and in extreme poverty, in November, 1773. Tate Wilkinson says that a clergyman of Chelsea, "at his own expense paid for his *poor* coffin;" but the generally accepted account is that which has it that Garrick offered to bury him, but that Mossop's uncle intervened and took charge of his funeral.

Mossop's chief physical qualification for his profession was his voice, which was of great compass; and, though not as full of melody as Barry's, yet harmonious throughout its entire range. It was of very

unusual power and volume, and, from its rich full tones, excellently adapted for the delivery of the sonorous tones of tragedy, whether these were solemn and dignified, or full of rage and fury. The softness of love, the gentleness of pity, were not within its compass; but all the sterner emotions found true expression in its powerful tones: and in scenes of wild vehemence and frenzy, its energy and fire were terribly impressive. That he was frequently too deliberate in speech is quite intelligible, and, no doubt, Churchill's sneer had considerable foundation; but it must be remembered that, in the glorification of Garrick, Mossop was certain, along with Barry, to be among the most viciously attacked, and that no mention whatever is made by the satirist of a single good quality in his acting. Churchill also criticises Mossop's stiffness of action and awkwardness of gesture, and these were his great faults; though towards the end of his career he corrected them to some extent.

But against these defects we have to set much that was admirable. In person Mossop was of medium height, and well made; his face was expressive: his eye piercing and full of intelligence. He was, too, an undoubtedly intellectual actor, and had excellent judgment—his conceptions of character being as a rule vivid and just. In addition to the advantages of good abilities and education, he had the invaluable gift of taking infinite pains. As a manager he rehearsed with great thoroughness, and, as an actor, he studied and elaborated his parts with a minuteness that is almost unparalleled. A curious instance of this is preserved in the *Monthly Mirror* for March, 1799, and is printed below. It is of great value as an

aid to determining Mossop's real powers, for it is undeniable that an actor, whose chief excellence was the wild and apparently unstudied beauty of his playing, and whose artistic preparation was yet so thorough and minute, must have been an artist of rare merit.

Mossop's best characters were *Zanga*, *Richard III.*, *Coriolanus*, the *Duke* in 'Measure for Measure,' *King John*, *Hotspur*, *Barbarossa*, *Bajazet*, *Pierre*, *Caled* in the 'Siege of Damascus,' *Memnon* in the 'Ambitious Stepmother,' *Marcian* in 'Theodosius,' *Sempronius* in 'Cato'; and in many others, including *Iago*, *Wolsey*, and *Cato*, he was admirable.

An excellent account of Mossop is given by Hitchcock, in his 'Historical View of the Irish Stage'; as also by Davies, in his 'Life of Garrick.' Tate Wilkinson's anecdotes of him are life-like and valuable; and Gentleman, in his preface to the 'Modish Wife,' gives many interesting particulars. The criticisms in the 'Dramatic Censor,' (1770), written by the latter, are obviously colored by the ill-feeling which Mossop's misconduct to himself had aroused.

ROBERT W. LOWE.

Mr. Mossop chose to give a specimen of his abilities in *Richard III.*, and in this he was wise; for in *Richard* the awkwardness of his action, and the untowardness of his deportment were well disguised. Mossop was rather a powerful speaker than a pleasing actor; he had a strong and harmonious voice, which could rise from the lowest note to the highest pitch of sound; it was, indeed, a voice the most comprehensive I ever heard. He excelled most in parts of turbulence and rage, of regal tyranny and sententious gravity.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. i., chap. 8.

Mossop's power of expression, in several situations of *Macbeth*, commanded attention and applause. Had he been acquainted with variety of action and easy deportment, he would have been justly admired in it. Barry ought never to have attempted that which was so opposite to his natural manner. He was not formed to represent the terrible agonies of *Macbeth*.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Miscellanies,' vol. ii., chap. 26.

Mossop's *Pierre* should not be forgotten; his fine full-toned voice, and strong expression of sentiment, gave uncommon spirit to the warmth and passion of the character. Though short-sighted, his eye seemed piercing, and big with what his mind conceived. In the interview with the conspirators, in the third act he threw a gallantry into his action as striking as it was unexpected. In this scene I should recollect that, formerly, *Pierre*, after challenging the other conspirators, addressed himself to one of them in the following terms:

Or thou! with that lean, wither'd, wretched face!

And that an actor of a most unfortunate figure, with a pale countenance, stood up, with a half-drawn sword, and raised a general laugh in the audience. The famous Tony Ashton, the itinerant comedian, was the last performer of this ridiculous part.

But Mossop excelled greatly in the vehement reproaches, which, in the fourth act, he poured, with acrimony and force, on the treachery and cowardice of *Jaffier*. The cadences of his voice were equally adapted to the loudest rage and the most deep and solemn reflection, which he judiciously varied.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Dramatic Miscellanies,' vol. iii., chap. 41.

Notwithstanding he was utterly void of grace in deportment and dignity in action, that he was awkward in his whole behavior. and hard sometimes in his expression, I observed that he was, in degree of stage excellence, the third actor; a Garrick and a Barry only were his superiors; in parts of vehemence and rage he was almost unequalled, and in sentimental gravity, from the power of his voice, and the justness of his conceptions, he was a very commanding speaker. It is not to be wondered that Mossop wished to act the lover and the hero. To aim at general excellence is laudable; but repeated unsuccessful trials could not convince him that he was utterly unfit for tenderness or joy, for gaiety and vivacity. *Caléd*, in the 'Siege of Damascus,' the wild, savage and enthusiastic Arabian, he acted with that force, fury and fire which the character demanded, but he would much rather have risked the displeasure of the audience by attempting *Phocyas*, the lover and the hero in the same play.

He was always best when he could conceal by the disguise of age or dress his shambling walk and his ungainly action. Of his lively and spirited characters *Pierre* was the principal; in *Richard III.* he was inferior only to Mr. Garrick.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. ii., chap. 45.

When Mossop quitted Barry and Woodward, at Crow Street, where he had thirty-six guineas a week, and set up for himself at Smock Alley, he was often fearful that the money coming in might not be sufficient to answer his outgoings, and when he played himself, he dreaded a thin house, lest his name should go down. I was one night in the greenroom, with many others, when Mossop, ready dressed for *Achmet*, in 'Barbarossa,' accosted Cristy, his treasurer (who was just come in from the street), in these words: "Mr. Cristy, does it snow?" Cristy, not comprehending the *cause* of the manager's question, hesitated; upon which, Mossop repeated calmly and deliberately, "Does it snow, sir?" Cristy still gave no answer; when Mossop, a third time asked, "Pray, does it snow?" A great deal of what is called humming and hawing followed on the part of the treasurer, but no decisive answer: upon which, Mossop addressed him in his lofty and superb manner: "Do you know what snow is?—snow is a small white feathered thing, that falls from the clouds; it lies upon the ground like a white sheet: now be so obliging as to step into the street, and bring me word whether it snows." Mossop's anxiety arose from doubts of the state of the weather, well knowing that on that depended a full or an empty house.

Mossop was most rigid at rehearsals : one morning going over *Macbeth's* scene of terror and distress in the last act, he has to call "*Seaton!*" The actor, who, for the first time, performed that part, came on, but *Macbeth* having more lines to speak before *Seaton* should appear, Mossop, in high anger, desired him to go back, and enter at his proper cue, and then he proceeded with his speech,—

I am sick at heart, when I behold—

Seaton, I say !

again the unlucky actor made a premature appearance, and Mossop again told him to go away and watch better for his cue ; and added, "To make you mind your business, sir " (turning to the prompter, who had his forfeit book and pen and ink ready on the table), ' set him down two half-crown forfeits ; that may, perhaps, prevent his spoiling the scene this night by his carelessness.' Mossop began his soliloquy, and, to his vexation, and that of the standers-by, the unlucky blundering actor still came on too soon : this was repeated four or five times, and he was forfeited each time. No one pitied his punishment, it being in his own power by simply reading *Macbeth's* speech, to have known his proper cue : however, though all went wrong with him at the rehearsal, everything was correct that night when in the presence of the audience.

I was one night witness to an untoward circumstance at Smock Alley Theatre. Congreve's 'Mourning Bride' was the tragedy : Mossop, *Osmín*, and a subordinate actor *Selim*. *Selim* being stabbed by *Osmín*. should have remained dead on the stage, but seized with a fit of coughing, he unluckily put up his hand and loosened his stock, which set the audience

in a burst of laughter. The scene over, the enraged manager and actor railed at his underling for daring to appear alive when he was dead, who in excuse, said he must have choked had he not done as he did : Mossop replied, "Sir, you should choke a thousand times, rather than spoil my scene."

At a period when the payments were not very ready at the Smock Alley treasury, one night Mossop, in *Lear*, was supported in the arms of an actor who played *Kent*, and who whispered him, "If you don't give me your honor, sir, that you'll pay me my arrears this night, before I go home, I'll let you drop about the boards." Mossop alarmed, said, "Don't talk to me now." "I will," said *Kent*, "I will; I'll let you drop." Mossop was obliged to give the promise, and the actor thus got his money, though a few of the others went home without theirs. Such the effect of a well-timed hint, though desperate.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' *vol. i., chap. 4.*

Mossop, from all I can collect, was a commanding but never an agreeable actor. There are various ways of convincing the mind. We are convinced by subtlety, by plausibility, by blandishment, and by eloquence; but we can also be convinced by perseverance, by confidence, by earnestness, and even by vehemence. These latter qualities seem to have been Mossop's mode of convincing an audience with an admiration of him, which, with all his pomp, his stiffness, his peculiarity, and his affectation, he contrived to bring about. I have heard Mossop praised for great and commanding powers in tragedy, such as no other actor ever possessed; and it has been insisted that if he was quaint

and starched at times, he was at other times grand and energetic, and indeed that his influence over the feelings of his auditors was irresistible. The mind, however, is not very fond of being threatened into pleasure; nor are those confessions very sincere that are effected by compulsion.

CHARLES DIBDIN: 'History of the Stage,' *book ix., chap. 10.*

[A speech from one of Mossop's parts, *Wolsey*, as marked by himself :—]

Eyes upwards. Surprise and peevish.
 "What should this mean? What sudden anger's this?

Sudden turn of voice—quick.
He parted frowning from me, as if ruin

Smart Wild.
Leap'd from his eye.

Voice quick and loud.
 I must read this paper;

Transition. Much breath. Opens paper very hastily.
 I fear the story of his anger.—'Tis so—

Strikes it quickly. Vast throbs of feeling.
This paper has undone me. 'Tis the account

Of all that world of *wealth* I've DRAWN together

Cunning and head nod. Dislike, teeth quite close. Lips partly pressed;
 To gain the Poppedom. O negligence!

Quick and high. Wild, sudden, spitefully and peevishly.
 Fit for a fool to fall by. What cross *devil*

Hurried spirit, and all in a breath.
 Made me put this MAIN SECRET in the packet

Pause.
 I sent the king?—Is there no way to cure this?

Face full to audience.
 Side look. Cunning, fretful and musing—swelling inward.
No new device to beat THIS from his brains?

Force. Loud. Pause. Then sudden turn.
 I know 'twill stir him strongly.

Opens letter.
What's this?—to the *Pope*.

Still look to the letter. Rest. Breathe out, slow step, and head declined.
 The *letter*, as I live, with all the business

Quite calm and resigned.
 I writ to's Holiness. Nay, then, farewell !

G tone, with feeling, but low.
 I have touch'd the highest point of all my greatness ;

No jerk.
 And, from that full *meridian* of my glory,

Finger G tone
 Under feeling. pointed down. Sudden pause.
 I haste now to my setting ; I shall fall

Solemn. Mournful.
 Like a bright *exhalation* in the evening,
 Weak manner. Feeling restrained. Wildness of old man.
 And *no* man see me more."

The Monthly Mirror, March, 1799.

FRANCES ABINGTON.

1737—1815.

Scarce had our tears forgot to flow,
By Garrick's loss inspired,
When Fame, to mortalize the blow,
Said Abington's retired.

Sad with the news, Thalia mourn'd ;
The Graces joined her train ;
And nought but sighs for sighs return'd,
Were heard at Drury Lane.

But see—'tis false ! in Nature's style
She comes, by Fancy dress'd ;
Again gives Comedy her smile,
And Fashion all her taste.

HORACE WALPOLE.



FRANCES ABINGTON.

FRANCES ABINGTON.

It is no mean test of a performer's ability, when the foremost painters of her day have found pleasure in painting her face and figure, for it seems to show that her strength of character and talent is imprinted on her exterior. Mrs. Abington sat several times to Sir Joshua Reynolds, as also to other painters, notably to Sherwin; and from these portraits we see that she had a face full of bright intelligence, though the mouth was coarse; and the graces and piquancy thus recorded suggest powers of comedy in repose and a latent vivacity.

Frances Barton was born about the year 1737—such dates are often purposely obscured in the case of actors—it may be said in the slums of Drury Lane, and was brought up in Vinegar Yard, close to the great theatre. Her brother was an ostler. Mr. Murphy was wont to relate how the gay girl used to get on the tables of Covent Garden taverns, and recite bits of Shakspeare; being rewarded with a trifling collection. A little later she was found as a kitchen-maid—so that no actress of the first rank ever rose from such humble beginnings. But she had so refined an instinct for knowledge and accomplishments, as almost to make us credit the claim later put forward for her, of genteel birth, and being descended from a Christopher Barton, Esquire, of Derbyshire. We next find her leading the usual free life duly

"protected," of which Taylor, the journalist, gives some particulars in his lively 'Records.' We meet her presently as Mrs. Abington, wife to one of the Royal Trumpeters, with whom she did not agree, and who was paid a small amount to keep away. She made her *début* in 1735 as *Miranda*, and soon made a speciality of the coquettes of comedy, such as *Beatrix*, *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish*, and *Millamant*. She seems to have had a "largeness of style" suited to such parts—in strong contrast to the petty, rather frivolous rendering, fashionable in our time. It was in Dublin and Cork which she visited under the charge of a Mr. Needham, that she obtained her first popularity. Her taste in dress was so admired that caps were long called after her, "Abington caps," to which some milliner slyly added, "for those who *need 'em*." In Dublin she also became the rage, and might take any liberties with the audience, as is evident from the account given by the eccentric Tate Wilkinson, engaged with her. Her imitation in private of two ridiculous acquaintances whom she called "Mrs. Fuz" and "Mrs. Jenkins," so delighted some of her noble admirers, that it was insisted she should give it on the stage. But when she and Wilkinson were discovered, after the first laugh they had nothing to say. Mrs. Fuz asked for a glass of wine, "upon my sould," says Mrs. Jenkins, "I will have a glass of wine too." The free and easy actress gave Mrs. Fuz a kick and got off the stage, the other running after her calling one "Mrs. Fuz, Mrs. Fuz"; the rest of the players looking foolish enough ran away also.

She had a praiseworthy ambition to be in good and refined society, and succeeded in her wishes. Her

celebrated benefit in 1775 is one of the scenes in which Dr. Johnson, deaf as he was, with his party, attended at her special request—a scene that might worthily engage the pencil of Frith or Marcus Stone. He went to see her because she was the favorite of the public, “and when you,” he said roughly to Boswell, “are a favorite of the public, I will go to your benefit also.” Johnson used to go to her parties, and he admired her jellies. Her quarrels with Garrick are well known, and he endorsed on one of her letters the words “from that worst of women.” She was constantly harassing him with her complaints of unfair treatment, perversely declining characters in plays got up for her, absenting herself on the pretext of illness. But her chief glory will ever be, that she was the first *Lady Teazle*, a part which she played with infinite breadth and yet vivacity. No one of the moderns has found the proper key to this character; there is too much tradition and too much solemnity in the last serious passages. Naturally they want the *entourage* of a comedy, the atmosphere of a great theatre devoted to comedy, which itself furnishes inspiration. She is admitted to have been the best of her time. There is a contemporary picture in the Garrick Club of the falling of the screen, and the sketch of her appears to be a likeness. Walpole declared “she was the very person.” She was succeeded in the part by Miss Farren. On her retirement from the stage, in 1799, she was well received in society, giving her card-parties and receiving “persons of quality.” Many particulars about her will be found in Taylor’s ‘Records,’ in the ‘Garrick Correspondence,’ and in that curious little volume ‘A Book for a Rainy Day.’

PERCY FITZGERALD.

She is known as "Nosegay Fan." Her father, a soldier in the Guards, mends shoes when off duty, in Windmill Street, Haymarket, and her brother waters the horses of the Hampstead stage, at the corner of Hanway Yard. Who would suppose that this little Fanny Barton who sells moss-roses would one day set the fashion to all the fine ladies in the three kingdoms; that Horace Walpole would welcome her more warmly to Strawberry Hill than an ordinary Princess, and that "Nosegay Fan" would be the original and never equalled *Lady Teazle*? Fanny Barton ran on errands for a French milliner, and occasionally encountered Baddeley when the latter was apprenticed to a confectioner, and was not dreaming of the Twelfth Cake he was to bequeath to the actors of Drury Lane. Then ensued some passages in her life that remind one of the training and experience of Nell Gwyn. The fascinating Fanny, in one way or another, made her way in the world, and for the sake of smiles, lovers courted ruin. This excessively brilliant, though not edifying, career did not last long.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' vol. ii., chap. 15.

This actress affords an extraordinary instance of the effect of industry, perseverance, and spirit. Her origin was of the lowest kind. She lived with her father in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane. Whether he was ever in any business, or how he supported himself with his daughter, afterwards Mrs. Abington, till she reached the age of about twelve, is not known, but at that period she was able to maintain herself and him, which she did in a very decent manner. Her maiden

name was Barton, as mentioned in many theatrical annals.

The late Arthur Murphy, whose learning and talents, particularly as a dramatic writer, have raised him far above any tribute of respect that I could offer to his memory, told me that he had seen her when she was about the age above mentioned, and that she then supported herself and her father by her recitations at the Bedford and Shakspeare Taverns, under the Piazzas in Covent Garden. Her custom was to desire the waiter to inform any private company in their rooms that she would deliver passages from Shakspeare and other writers for a small reward. When the company consented, she stepped upon the table and delivered the several compositions. Everything relative to the stage was interesting to Mr. Murphy, and that feeling induced him to pay particular attention to this theatrical girl, which fixed her person on his memory. As she increased in age and practice, this itinerant profession became less attractive as a novelty, and she was then driven to the necessity of adopting more profligate and degrading means of support; and this degrading profession, which it is not necessary to designate more particularly, she was in the habit of pursuing for some years before she happily found her way to the theatrical boards.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of My Life,' *vol. i., chap. 33.*

Ireland as a school for young actresses had been long rendered of first-rate importance by the brilliant career of Mrs. Abington, who acted at both the Dublin theatres, and unquestionably possessed very peculiar, and hitherto unapproached, talent. She, I think, took

more entire *possession* of the stage than any actress I have seen. There was, however, no assumption in her dignity. She was a lawful and grateful sovereign, who exerted her full power, and enjoyed her established prerogatives. The ladies of her day wore the hoop and its concomitant train. The *Spectator's* exercise of the fan was really no play of fancy. Shall I say that I have never seen it in a hand so dexterous as that of Mrs. Abington? She was a woman of great application; to speak as she did required more *thought* than usually attends female study. Far the greater part of her sex rely upon an intuition which seldom misleads them: such discernment as it gives becomes habitual, and is commonly sufficient, or sufficient for common purposes. But commonplace was not the station of Abington. She was always beyond the surface: untwisted all the chains which bind ideas together, and seized upon the exact cadence and emphasis by which the point of the dialogue is enforced. Her voice was of a high pitch, and not very powerful. Her management of it alone made it an organ. Yet this was so perfect that we sometimes converted the mere effect into a cause, and supposed it was the sharpness of the tone that gave the sting. Yet her figure considered, her voice rather sounded inadequate; its articulation, however, gave both strength and smartness to it, though it could not give it sweetness. You heard her well and without difficulty; and it is the first duty of a public speaker to be audible and intelligent. Her deportment is not so easily described: more womanly than Farren; fuller, yet not heavy, like Younge, and far beyond even the conception of modern fine ladies, Mrs. Abington

remains in memory as a thing for chance to restore to us rather than design, and revive our polite comedy at the same time.

JAMES BOADEN: 'Life of Mrs. Jordan,' *vol. i., chap. 1.*

As an actress, Mrs. Abington was distinguished for spirit and humor, rather than for high-breeding and elegance. She excelled in the delivery of sarcastic humor, to which the shrewdness of her mind and the tartness of her tone gave the most effective piquancy. Her manners were not sufficiently graceful and well-bred for Congreve's *Millamant* altogether, but, in those passages where she taunts *Marwood*, there was a stinging severity in her delivery that would have fully satisfied the author. *Beatrice* has more wit and pertness than good-breeding, and in that part she was excellent; and also in *Estifania*, another character that demands vivacity and humor, not elegance. She was the first *Lady Teazle*, and that character was admirably suited to her talents. It was understood that she was well acquainted with the French authors, and could converse in Italian. She was received in many good families as an admired companion. When or why she married, I know not. Her husband, I understand, was a musician. They had been separated many years, and it was reported that she allowed him an annuity not to molest her.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of My Life,' *vol. i., chap. 33.*

Mrs. Abington can never go beyond *Lady Teazle*, which is a second-rate character, and that rank of

women who are always aping Women of Fashion without arriving at the stage.

HORACE WALPOLE : ' Letters,' *vol. iv.*, To the Countess of Ossory, June 14, 1787.

So various and unlimited in her talents that she is not confined to females of a superior class ; she can descend occasionally to the country girl, the romp, the hoyden, and the chambermaid, and put on the various humors, airs and whimsical peculiarities of these underparts ; she thinks nothing low that is in nature ; nothing mean or beneath her skill, which is characteristical.

The decency of her behavior in private life has attracted the notice and gained her the esteem of many persons of quality of her own sex.

It is with the greatest pleasure I speak of Mrs. Abington's action in *Charlotte*; though the part had been most excellently performed by Mrs. Oldfield, and since her time with great applause and approbation by Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Pritchard ; yet it is impossible to conceive that more gaiety, ease, humor, elegance, and grace, could have been assumed by any actress, than by Mrs. Abington in this part ; her ideas of it were entirely her own, for she had seen no pattern.

But the various talents of Mrs. Abington will demand from a stage historian particular attention, and a more accurate description of them : her person is formed with great elegance, her address is graceful, her look animated and expressive. To the goodness of her understanding, and the superiority of her taste, she is indebted chiefly for her power of pleasing ; the tones of her voice are not naturally charming to the

ear, but her incomparable skill in modulation renders them perfectly agreeable; her articulation is so exact, that every syllable she utters is conveyed distinctly, and even harmoniously. Congreve's *Millamant* of past times she has skilfully modelled and adapted to the admired coquette and the lovely tyrant of the present day. All ages have their particular colors and variations of follies and fashions; these she understands perfectly, and dresses them to the taste of the present hour. In Shakspeare's *Beatrice* she had difficulties to encounter; remembrance of Mrs. Pritchard's excellence in that favorite part had stamped a decisive mark on the mode of representing it; notwithstanding this, Mrs. Abington, knowing her own particular powers of expression, would not submit to an imitation of that great actress, but exhibited the part according to her own ideas; nor did she fail of gaining great applause wherever her judgment directed her to point out the wit, sentiment, or humor of *Beatrice*.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Life of Garrick,' vol. ii., chap. 42.

For some eighteen years Mrs. Abington continued to be a member of the Drury Lane company, the most admired representative of the grand coquettes and queens of comedy—greatly successful as *Beatrice*, as *Lady Townly*, as *Lady Betty Modish*, *Millamant*, and *Charlotte* in the 'Hypocrite.' She could appear as either *Lucy Lockit* or *Polly Peachum*, as *Biddy Tipkin* or *Mrs. Termagant*, as *Miss Prue* or as *Miss Hoyden*. Her Shakspearean characters were *Portia*, *Beatrice*, *Desdemona*, *Olivia*, and *Ophelia*. Murphy dedicated to her his comedy of the 'Way to Keep Him,' in recognition of her genius and of those

"graces of action," which had endowed his play with brilliancy, and even an air of novelty twenty-five years after its first production. She appeared in *Lydia Languish*, and she was the original representative of *Lady Teazle*. Her figure is described as singularly elegant, albeit toward the close of her career she acquired a matronly aspect ill-suited to the youthful characters she was still fond of impersonating; she was of graceful address, animated and expressive of glance and gesture. The tones of her voice were not naturally musical, were indeed high-pitched and not very powerful, but her elocutionary skill rendered them pleasing. Her articulation was so exact that every syllable she uttered was distinct and harmonious. Her ease was unaffected, her elegance spirited, her discrimination impressive.

DUTTON COOK: 'Hours with the Players,' *vol. i., chap. 5.*

Mrs. Abington *had been*—was still [1784] in point of skill and spirit; but time, the inexorable enemy of beauty, had rendered it impossible for the spectator to believe that the matronly *embonpoint* of the actress belonged to *Rosalind*, or *Portia*, or *Lady Teazle*, or *Violante*.

WILLIAM DUNLAP: 'History of 'the American Theatre,' *vol. ii., chap. 21.*

This perpetual evidence of youth was in character with her person and her powers; the slimness of her figure, the fulness of her voice, the freshness of her spirits, the sparkle of her eye, and the elasticity of her limbs savored alike of a juvenility that puzzled the

mind, whilst it pleased it : of her it was justly said, that she had been on the stage thirty years ; she was one and twenty when she came, and one and twenty when she left.

JOHN BERNARD : 'Retrospections of the Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. 7.*

Mrs. Abington's person was formed with great elegance, her address was graceful, her look animated and expressive—to the goodness of her understanding and the superiority of her taste, she was indebted principally for the power of pleasing—the tones of her voice were not naturally charming to the ear, but her incomparable skill in modulation rendered them perfectly agreeable—her articulation was so exact, that every syllable she uttered was conveyed distinctly, and even harmoniously—the natural manner in which she delivered her author's text can not be too highly praised—the audience perceived no study, no labor, no painful exertion to entrap applause—her ease was unaffected, her elegance spirited, her discrimination impressive. . . . Mrs. Abington's taste for dress was so exquisite that she was often consulted by her female friends—she was received at the houses of many ladies of high rank, which was somewhat extraordinary, for though her conduct was latterly correct, yet it had not always been so—this connection with persons of quality made Mrs. Abington a little elated.

P. GENEST : 'History of the Stage,' *vol. vii.*; Covent Garden, 1798—1799.

With Mrs. Abington came a species of excellence which the stage seems never before to have boasted in

the same perfection. The higher parts in comedy had been performed chastely and truly; perhaps in these particulars more so than by this actress. There was a peculiar goodness gleamed across the levity of Mrs. Pritchard, and by what we can learn of Mrs. Bracegirdle, who seems to have possessed the same captivating sort of manner which distinguished Mrs. Abington, she was in these characters natural and winning. But it remained for her successor to add a degree of grace, fashion, and accomplishment to sprightliness, which was no sooner seen than it was imitated in the politest circles.

CHARLES DIBDIN: 'History of the Stage,' *book x., chap. 11.*

I regret to say, that the last time I saw her on the stage, I thought I perceived a great falling off in her theatrical powers, and a poor substitution of a kind of vulgar humor and grimace, for her former vivacity and genius. In the meridian of her days she was admired for her taste in dress, but I learned from some good female judges, that she declined in that respect also, and that a gaudy parade appeared instead of her former elegance of attire. The last time I saw her, after she left the stage, was at the house of her old friend, Mr. Nealson, who was stockbroker to the banking-house of Messrs. Coutts & Co., and also to that of Snow & Co., near Temple Bar. Mr. Nealson was alarmingly ill, and attended by Dr. Blaine. I had called to inquire how he was, for he was too ill to admit visitors; and as I was departing I met Mrs. Abington in the passage, who came for the same purpose. She seemed to be under the influence of

extraordinary prudery, her reign of gallantry having long passed by, and declined telling her name to the servant, but desired the master might be merely told that the *gentlewoman* had called to inquire after his health. As I knew the high regard that Nealson had for her, I pressed her to leave her name, as I was sure that such an attention on her part would soothe his sufferings, and perhaps promote his recovery. She was inflexible, and watched me lest I should disclose her name. I hastily returned to the servant, as if to deliver another message, and whispered "Mrs. Abington." "I know it, sir," said the woman, and I parted with Mrs. Abington at the door.

It would hardly have been in the power of anybody who had known her in better days, to recognize her person at that time. She had on a common red cloak, and her general attire seemed to indicate the wife of an inferior tradesman, and the whole of her demeanor was such as might be expected from a woman of that rank. It is with pleasure I add, that she must have been in easy circumstances on her retirement from the stage, as she lived in Pall Mall, where I once visited her, previous to my meeting her at the house of Mr. Nealson, who soon after died, leaving her and my old friend, Mr. Cook, the barrister, £100 each, and £50 to each of the Theatrical Funds.

JOHN TAYLOR : 'Records of My Life,' *vol. i., chap. 33.*

June 16, 1811.—Dined at Sergeant Rough's, and met the once celebrated Mrs. Abington. From her present appearance one can hardly suppose she could ever have been otherwise than plain. She herself laughed at her snub-nose ; but she is erect, has a large,

blue, expressive eye, and an agreeable voice. She spoke of her retirement from the stage as occasioned by the vexations of a theatrical life. She said she should have gone mad, if she had not quitted her profession. She has lost all her professional feelings, and when she goes to the theatre can laugh and cry like a child ; but the trouble is too great, and she does not often go.

It is so much a thing of course that a retired actor should be a *laudator temporis acti*, that I felt unwilling to draw from her any opinion of her successors. Mrs. Siddons, however, she praised, though not with the warmth of a genuine admirer. She said : " Early in life Mrs. Siddons was anxious to succeed in comedy, and played *Rosalind* before I retired." In speaking of the modern declamation and the too elaborate emphasis given to insignificant words, she said, " That was brought in by them " (the Kembles). She spoke with admiration of the Covent Garden horses, and I have no doubt that her praise was meant to have the effect of satire.

Of all the present actors Murray most resembles Garrick. She spoke of Barry with great warmth. He was a nightingale. Such a voice was never heard. He confined himself to characters of great tenderness and sweetness, such as *Romeo*. She admitted the infinite superiority of Garrick, in genius. *His* excellence lay in the bursts and quick transitions of passion, and in the variety and universality of his genius. Mrs. Abington would not have led me to suppose she had been on the stage, by either her manner or the substance of her conversation. She speaks with the ease of a person used to good society, rather than with the assurance of one whose business it was to imitate that ease.

HENRY CRABB ROBINSON : ' Diary,' vol. i., chap. 14.

I regret Mrs. Abington too—she was the Grosvenor Square of comedy, if you please. I am glad Hogarth did not paint her; it would have been a thing to spit upon.

WM. HAZLITT : 'Mr. Northcote's Conversations,' *xx*.

The more I see of Mrs. Abington, the more am I captivated, and the more am I resolved to follow her example, as far as my abilities will permit me. How graceful, yet how perfectly easy are all her actions ! and although she never seems to exert her voice above its common pitch, yet from her perfect articulation of every word, she is heard, even when she whispers, distinctly over all the house ; then in her various characters, hoydens, chambermaids, or high-bred women of fashion, she is never Mrs. Abington on the stage before an audience, but the very being she represents, giving whether speaking or silent, such natural animation to the scene, that the fascinated spectators almost believe it to be real. By these perfections Mrs. Abington has risen almost to the highest pinnacle of fame ; and though I can never tread in her mazy paths, or rise so high, she may still be my guiding star ; I may attain by care and the assistance of my father, her distinct pronounciation, and perhaps I may attain in some degree, the dignity of her deportment. Oh ! I wish I may ! But one, and not the least of her perfections is within my reach ; that I will attain her perfect attention to the business of the scene. In the first and second of my ambitious wishes I may certainly fail from want of abilities, but in the third I can only fail from carelessness, and shall deem myself unpardonable.

MRS. CROUCH, reported in M. J. Young's 'Memoirs of Mrs. Crouch,' *vol. i., pp. 87-9.*

MR. GARRICK TO MRS. ABINGTON.

HAMPTON, Jan. 28th, 1775.

Maâam, — The famous French writer, Fontenelle, takes notice that nothing is so difficult to a man of sensibility as writing to a lady, even with just grounds of complaint. However, having promised, I must answer your last very extraordinary note. You accuse me of incivility for writing to you through Mr. Hopkins. Did not Mrs. Abington first begin that mode of correspondence? and without saying a word to me, did she not send back her part in the new comedy, and say that she had settled that manner with Mr. Cumberland? Could a greater affront be offered to any manager? And was not your proposing to Mr. Hopkins that you would speak my epilogue written for the character, while *another person* was to perform the part, not only mere mockery of me, but destroying the play at once? Let your warmest and most partial friend decide between us. Whenever you are really ill, I feel both for you and myself; but the servant said last Wednesday, that you *were well and had a great deal of company*.

You mention your *great fatigue*. What is the stage come to, if I must continually hear of your hard labor, when from the beginning of the season until this time you have not played more than twice a week!

Mrs. Oldfield performed *Lady Townly* for twenty-nine nights successively. Let us now examine how just and genteel your complaint is against me. I promised you that I would procure a character of consequence to be written on purpose for you, and that it would be your own fault, if you were not on the

highest pinnacle of your profession. I have been at great pains, and you know it, to be as good as my word.

I directed and assisted the author to make a small character a very considerable one for you ; I spared no expense in dresses, music, scenes, and decorations for the piece ; and now the *fatigue of acting* this character is very unjustly as well as unkindly, brought against me.

Had you played this part *forty* times, instead of *twenty*, my gains would be less than by any other successful play I have produced in my management.

The greatest favor I can confer upon an actress is to give her the best character in a favorite piece ; and the longer it runs, the more merit I have with her, and ought to receive her thanks instead of her complaints. In short, Madam, *if you play*, you are uneasy, and if you do not, you are more so. After what you said to Mr. Becket, and what I promised, I little thought to have your *farce* drawn in to make up the bundle of complaints. However, to make an end of this disagreeable business, as the piece is written out, I am ready to do it, and that you may have Palmer, I will give up the revived comedy ; but even this, I know, will not satisfy you—nor can you fix in your mind *what will*.

Were I to look back, what *real* complaints have I to make for leading me into a fool's paradise last summer about a certain comedy ! and an alarming secret you told me lately of a disagreeable quarrel. On my return home the same morning I met one of the parties, and instead of a quarrel between them, they were upon the best terms, had never had the least difference, and

Mr. M[urphy] was writing at Mr. T[ighe]'s desire, a prologue for his friend's [Jephson's] new tragedy.

Mr. Garrick most solemnly assures Mrs. Abington that nobody has in the least influenced him in this affair, and he hopes the above recital will convince her of the truth of his assertion.

I am, Madam, your most obedient servant,

D. GARRICK.

[Endorsed,]

"This letter to Mrs. Abington was not sent."

DAVID GARRICK: 'Private Correspondence,' *second edition*, vol. ii., pp. 42-3.

As to her private life, it is so strictly under the guidance of circumspection and decorum, that malice and envy, stung at the prudent and economical elegance of her situation, make daily but fruitless efforts to descry some reproachable part in her conduct. Her filial duty towards, and comfortably supporting of, an aged father, accompanied with a cheerful benevolence to worthy objects in distress, are virtues which do honor to the most exalted character. She is deservedly esteemed for a scrupulous exactness in her dealings, and for being capable of the most disinterested friendship when raised on the basis of merit.

London Magazine, March, 1771.

GEORGE ANN BELLAMY.

1730—1788.

When Bellamy first trod the fatal road,
That leads to Pleasure, and her gay abode,
The flow'ry path her lively fancy charm'd,
Her heart the syren voice of flatt'ry warm'd ;
Unguarded, beautiful, by all admir'd,
The love of praise her infant breast inspir'd ;
Too young to take grave Prudence for her guide ;
Dress, equipage, and festive mirth her pride ;
Luxuriant elegance her table crown'd ;
Her sprightly wit enliven'd all around.
How great the change ! the jocund hours are fled !
Her gay, her noble guests, alas, are dead !
One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
The pangs of penury she's doom'd to feel ;
Hid from the world, a prey to silent grief,
Forlorn she sat, asham'd to ask relief ;
In her sad heart Despair had found a place,
And whisper'd, Seek for ease in Death's embrace.
The night was dark, the river's brink she sought,
Trembling—irresolute—immers'd in thought.
The voice of misery assail'd her ears,
The woes of others ever claim'd her tears ;
Still Charity within her bosom glow'd,
And her last mite on hunger she bestow'd.
Rous'd from the gloomy horrors of a dream,
Hope draws upon her soul a cheering beam !
She trusts in Heaven, and quits the fatal stream.

M. J. YOUNG.



GEORGE ANN BELLAMY.

GEORGE ANN BELLAMY.

No fewer than four English actresses, most of whom were as frail as they were fair, have furnished full and confidential memoirs of their lives. These are, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Baddeley, Mrs. Robinson and Mrs. Charke. These accounts are not unentertaining, though written in rather a valet style by some literary hack, in their inspiration. These productions are remarkable for their unbounded variety, absence of dates, and high-flown exaggeration. George Ann—or Georgiana—Bellamy's are of a rambling kind, but have some dramatic scenes and sketches of character, Fox, Garrick, Sheridan, senior, and many more notable people figuring in her pages. This actress was the illegitimate daughter of Lord Tyrawley,—who was ambassador to Portugal, and who is mentioned by Pope,—and her mother was a farmer's daughter, who later married a Captain Bellamy. George Ann was born about the year 1730, and was sent to a French convent by her father. Rich, the manager, happening to hear her recite, engaged her, and she made her *début* at Covent Garden in November, 1744. Her beauty and intelligence made an impression: Lord Byron, a notorious rake of the day, pursued her, but as she declined all proposals "except marriage and a coach," he actually carried her off, but the young actress was rescued.

She next appeared in Dublin with Garrick, under Sheridan's management, and she records several lively incidents of life and manners in the Irish capital. O'Keefe, then a youth, noted how "very beautiful" she was with her "fair face and blue eyes." He had often seen her, attending Liffy Street Chapel with her "splendid state sedan chair and superb silver lace liveries." She seemed destined always to figure as a heroine, and was the cause of a well-known riot in the Dublin Theatre, when a young collegian climbed upon the stage and burst into her dressing-room.

A quarrel which occurred between her and Peg Woffington, in the greenroom in London, on account of some handsome dresses procured from Paris, caused some scandal and much amusement. In the celebrated 'Romeo and Juliet' contest between the two theatres, in 1750, she was chosen as Garrick's *Juliet*, playing against Barry and a Miss Rossiter, who is otherwise not known to fame. On the one side the *Romeo* was the handsomest and most musical in his tones, on the other the *Juliet* was the most beautiful: it was difficult therefore to give the palm. Reynolds, a good judge, said she was "an accomplished actress;" and Dr. Johnson in his laconic way pronounced that "Bellamy leaves nothing to be desired." She was a sprightly companion and better company than Peg Woffington herself. Her stage manager in Dublin, the quaint old Chetwood, said of her: "She has a most admirable improving genius; therefore it will be no wonder if she soon reaches the top of perfection. She has a liberal, open heart, to feel and ease the distresses of the wretched." This was her redeeming merit—good-nature.

After this period she began to fall into a disreputable course of life, passing from one protector to another, and gradually getting so accustomed to debts and difficulties as to record periodical arrests and conveyance to the King's Bench, as ordinary incidents of her life. Abandoned by admirers, she sank into decay, and appearing at Dublin, astonished all by the wreck she presented. "The roses were fled:" the young, the once lovely Bellamy was turned haggard; and her eyes appeared sunk, large, hollow, and ghastly. "O Time, Time!" exclaims old Tate Wilkinson, "thy glass should be often consulted." She tersely, frankly describes herself as "a little dirty creature, bent nearly double, a skin tinged with jaundice." She was received without applause, and her performance disappointed all. Finally she fell into poverty and misery, and was glad to find shelter at "The Dog and Duck" per 12s. a week. A benefit was arranged for her in 1785, when she appeared seated in a chair and Miss Farren spoke an address that ended with the doggerel:

But see, oppressed with gratitude, and tears,
To pay her duteous tribute she appears.

She died three years later. Thiers in 1822, then a young writer on the press, was struck by reading her life and adventures; he prepared an introduction to a French translation of her memoirs, declaring in truly French style, that he here saw "the candor of a great soul, which confident in the nobility of her intentions, revealed every questionable act of her life."

PERCY FITZGERALD.

The important night, big with the fate of Miss Bellamy, at length arrived ; the curtain drew up and a splendid audience was assembled, but she was so dazzled by the lights, and stunned by the plaudits, that she stood for some time like a statue. Quin exulted at her confusion, and Rich, astonished at the effect entreated her to exert herself. She tried, but could not be heard in the side boxes. The applause continued during the first act. The manager, having pledged himself for her success, had planted friends in different parts of the house to insure it ; but finding her unable to recover her self-possession, he was distracted, as if his own fate had depended upon her. Again he had recourse to persuasion, but nothing could rouse her, till the fourth act, when, to the amazement of the audience, the surprise of the other performers, and the exultation of the manager, she felt herself suddenly awakened, and burst out with great splendor. Quin was so astonished at this unexpected display, that with his wonted generosity of nature he waited behind the scenes till the conclusion of the act, when lifting her from the ground, he exclaimed aloud, "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee." Her triumph was complete ; the other performers, who half an hour before regarded her with pity, crowded around, and loaded her with congratulations.

JOHN GALT : 'Lives of the Players,' vol. ii., Bellamy.

The most exciting event of this season was the abduction of Mrs. Bellamy, while playing *Mrs. Fanciful* to Quin's *Bute*. A gentleman named Mentham, begged

to be allowed to speak with her in the hall of the theatre, and thence carried her off and bore her away, little loth, I think, in his carriage. Quin explained the matter to the audience, who enjoyed it as a good thing done, and a pleasant thing to hear of.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. i.*, chap. 26.

Mrs. Bellamy had performed *Julie* with Mr. Garrick in London, on its first great run, and supported a line of principal characters in both the London theatres. Her benefits were brilliant; so she had fashion and name, with the London currency, to insure her reception, and had been in Dublin when Mr. Sheridan was manager, when Mr. Garrick acted at the same time, and was esteemed their first actress, was looked at as a charming, elegant young woman, and was the universal toast in Ireland in 1747. Her character was also at that juncture respectable, and she was received as a fashionable gentlewoman in several of the first families there. . . . Mossop, as a manager, made his first appearance in *Pierre*, in 'Venice Preserved,' in November, 1760; *Belvidera*, Mrs. Bellamy, being the first night of her performing. Expectation was so great that the house filled as fast as the people could thrust in, with or without, paying. On speaking the first line behind the scenes—

Lead me, ye Virgins, lead me to that kind voice,
it struck the ears of the audience as uncouth and unmusical; yet she was received as was prepared and determined by all who were her or Mr. Mossop's friends, and the public at large with repeated plaudits on her *entrée*. But the roses were fled; the young, the once

lovely Bellamy was turned haggard ! and her eyes that used to charm all hearts, appeared sunk, large, hollow and ghostly. O Time ! Time ! thy glass should be often consulted ! for before the short first scene had elapsed, disappointment, chagrin, and pity sat on every eye and countenance. . . . She left Dublin without a single friend to regret her loss. What a change from the days of her youth ! and, as an actress of note, her name never more ranked in any theatre, nor did she ever again rise in public estimation.

TATE WILKINSON : 'Memoirs,' *vol. ii.*

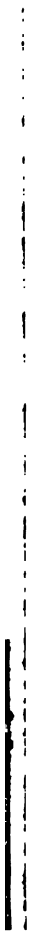
Upon this principle we can say of Mrs. Bellamy that she was natural, easy, chaste, and impressive ; that as far as person, features, voice, and conception went, none of which were by any means of an inferior description, she highly pleased and never offended ; but these commendations, respectable as they rank her, would be cold and negative applied to Mrs. Cibber or Mrs. Pritchard, who commanded attention, who seized the passions, and modelled them at their will. But with all this deduction, the public would be a good deal astonished to see such an actress as Mrs. Bellamy at this moment, were Mrs. Siddons out of the question.

CHARLES DIBDIN : 'History of the Stage,' *book ix., chap. 10.*

What with the loves, caprices, charms, extravagances and sufferings of Mrs. Bellamy, she excited the wonder, admiration, pity and contempt of the town for thirty years. The Mr. Mentham she might have married, she would not,—Colcraft and Digges, whom she would have, and the last of whom she thought she *had*



GEORGE ANN BELLAMY
From "Bellamy's Apology."



married, she could not, for both had wives living. To say that she was a siren who lured men to destruction, is to say little, for she went down to him with each victim ; but she rose from the wreck more exquisitely seductive and terribly fascinating than ever, to find a new prey whom she might ensnare and betray.

DR. DORAN : 'Annals of the English Stage,' *vol. ii., chap. 15.*

I will, however, dwell for a moment on a last appearance which I witnessed, namely, that of Mrs. Bellamy, who took her leave of the stage May 24, 1785. On this occasion Mrs. Yates, who had retired from the profession, performed the part of the *Duchess of Braganza*, and Miss Farren, the present Countess of Derby, spoke an address, which concluded with the following couplet :—

But see, oppress'd with gratitude and tears,
To pay her duteous tribute she appears.

The curtain then ascended, and Mrs. Bellamy being discovered, the whole house immediately arose to mark their favorable inclinations towards her, and from anxiety to obtain a view of this once celebrated actress, and, in consequence of the publication of her life, then celebrated authoress. She was seated in an arm-chair, from which she in vain attempted to rise, so completely was she subdued by her feelings. She, however, succeeded in muttering a few words, expressive of her gratitude, and then sinking into her seat, the curtain dropped before her ; having by these few farewell words, perhaps, more deeply affected her audience, than by her best efforts in *Juliet* and *Cleone*.

FREDERICK REYNOLDS : 'Life,' *vol. i., chap. 8.*

TATE WILKINSON.

1739—1803

Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even shadows have their shadows too !
With not a single comic power endued,
The first a mere mere mimic's mimic stood.

CHARLES CHURCHILL : the 'Rosciad,' (*Ed.* 1763).



TATE WILKINSON.



TATE WILKINSON.

It is not as an actor but rather as a friend of actors that Tate Wilkinson merits a place among the theatrical notabilities of last century. He played many parts in his time, by no means without applause, but in everything save mimicry it is evident that he was a pigmy among such giants as Garrick, Barry and Mossop. It was by force of character rather than of genius that he made himself a power in the theatrical world. By force of character, too, by shrewdness, humor, keenness of observation, good sense and good nature, he succeeded in producing the book which deserves to be bracketted with Cibber's 'Apology' in the very first place among theatrical memoirs of last century. What Cibber does for the first half of the century, Wilkinson does for the last half. Their books are, of all their kind, the two we could least afford to lose.

Tate Wilkinson was born on Oct. 27, 1739. He was the only son of the Rev. Dr. Wilkinson "his Majesty's chaplain of the Savoy." Already as a child he mimicked his father's preaching, and the acting of the company at Covent Garden where he used (oddly enough) to be freely admitted to the morning rehearsals. After going for some years to a private school at Wandsworth, he was transferred in 1752 to Harrow, whence he soon ran away, only to be brought back and flogged.

His sole distinction at school seems to have been achieved by means of imitations of Peg Woffington's *Lady Townly* and Barry's *Romeo*, which were pronounced "surprising indeed." About 1755 misfortune began to overtake the Wilkinson family. Dr. Wilkinson, as minister of the Savoy, chose to consider himself exempt from the provisions of the recently-passed marriage act (26 Geo. II. c. 33,) and continued "to grant licenses as usual." This practice produced a plentiful crop of fees, but led to a prosecution which resulted in the transportation for fourteen years of a "marrying clergyman" who acted as Dr. Wilkinson's deputy, and ultimately of the Doctor himself. Tate Wilkinson alleges that it was a piece of busybodyism on the part of David Garrick which brought the authorities down upon the Savoy Gretna-Green, but Garrick's part in the matter was very indirect. Dr. Wilkinson sailed for America in March, 1757, but died in Plymouth Sound, where his ship had been driven by stress of weather.

Thus thrown upon his own resources at the age of seventeen, Wilkinson at once turned to the theatre, and was enrolled as one of Rich's "pupils." He managed, however, to call down upon himself the wrath of Mistress Woffington, who insisted that Rich should not give him any engagement, "no, not of the most menial kind." The comedian Shuter fortunately stood his friend, and at his benefit (March 18,* 1757), Wilkinson made his first appearance as the *Fine Gentleman* in Garrick's 'Letter.' "It certainly was a dreadful performance," he himself tells us, and Rich cannot be accused of great obtuseness to merit when he

* Wilkinson says 28th March. See Genest, iv., 494.

assured "Muster Williamskin" that he was unfit for the stage and declined to "larn" himself. He retained his right of entrance behind the scenes, however, and was standing in the wing on May 3, 1757,[†] when Peg Woffington broke down in the epilogue to 'As You Like It,' and tottered off the stage never to appear again. A few days afterwards he called upon Garrick, and requested an engagement. "The great little man" was charmed with his imitation of Foote, and at once put him on the books for the ensuing season at thirty shillings a week. On joining the Drury Lane company in September, 1757, he was not even given a speaking part. Foote, however, was going to Dublin for a short season, and, having seen a specimen of Wilkinson's powers as a mimic, offered to take him thither as his chief supporter. Garrick consented and the pair set forth; but scarcely had Tate landed in Dublin when he was attacked by a dangerous fever. It was not till about Christmas that he was announced to appear as the *First Pupil* in Foote's 'Tea.' His imitation of Sparks as *Capulet*, Barry as *Alexander*, Barry and Woffington as *Macbeth* and *Lady Macbeth* were received with enthusiasm (though Woffington had declared that if he "dared to take her off" in her native place he would be "stoned to death"); and encouraged by success he gave an imitation of Foote before his own face, which enraptured the audience and confirmed his reputation.

From this time onwards Wilkinson's popularity as an actor, and particularly as a mimic, steadily increased. For the next nine years, until he assumed the management of the York theatre, he usually played

[†] Wilkinson says (wrongly) 17th May. See Genest, iv., 495.

either at Drury Lane or Covent Garden in the winter and set off on strolling expeditions, to Winchester, Portsmouth, Exeter, Chester, Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, etc., in the summer. Innumerable were the difficulties with his fellow-actors in which his powers of mimicry involved him. In his first season at Dublin he was simple enough to offer to give an imitation of Sheridan on his own stage, and was forthwith requested by the indignant manager to leave his house. At Drury Lane, during the following season (1758), his imitation of the Woffington was put a stop to through the intervention of her protector, Colonel Cæsar. On the remonstrance of the Covent Garden actors Garrick sent for him, and on the open stage, in the presence of the company, forbade him to indulge in any mimicry, taking care, however, that the public, at night, should call for the whole of his imitations and refuse to be pacified until he had gone through them. This comedy of the *coulisses* Wilkinson details with inimitable humor ('Memoirs,' ii., 9-40), reproducing to the life the fussy and staccato manner of Garrick with his "hey, now, hey" at every second phrase and his plenteous sprinkling of expletives; the pert "Fie, young man! fie!" of Kitty Clive; and the swelling port of Mossop, "the turkey-cock of the stage," who said to him, "If you were to take such a liberty with me, sir, I would draw my sword and run it through your body, *sir!* You should not live, *sir!*" The climax of the comedy came when, encouraged by the applause of the audience, the mimic delighted them with an imitation of the "incomparable Roscius" himself, a liberty which Garrick never entirely forgave, and which, being repeated at Covent Garden in 1760,

led to the final breach between the two. In Dublin, again, during the contest between the Crow Street and Smock Alley theatres, it is most amusing to follow the intrigues of each party to prevent Wilkinson from imitating them, while encouraging him to exercise his powers upon their rivals. Even his earliest friend, Shuter, was at one time estranged from him because he had ventured to "take him off," and it says a good deal for the inherent amiability of the man that his redoubtable talent did not make him a pariah in his profession. He tells us himself that his mimicry was more artistic than Foote's, and there is reason to suppose that this was really the case.

He was not solely a mimic, however. During his first engagement in Dublin, when he was still under twenty, he played *Othello* to Foote's *Iago*, and we find on the list of characters which he frequently acted: *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III.*, *Romeo*, *Hotspur*, *Shylock*, *Wolsey*, *Petruchio*, *Kitely*, *Bayes*, *Zanga*, *Sir John Brute*, and other parts of the most formidable description. Even in these parts, no doubt, his mimicry stood him in good stead. He confesses that his *Othello* was an imitation of Barry's, and relates how an irate actress once addressed him thus: "You brute of a manager! Why, you never had any merit as an actor yourself, or if you had it was only gleaned from others and not any of your own." It must be remembered, moreover, that he played these great parts almost exclusively before country audiences. In town he was known chiefly as a mimic and as a performer in Foote's farces. On the occasion of Miss Pope's first appearance (Drury Lane, Oct. 27, 1759), he played *Mrs. Amlet* in the 'Confederacy,' and two other female parts which he

sometimes performed were *Queen Dollalolla* in Fielding's 'Tom Thumb,' and *Lady Chloris* in the 'Rehearsal.' "His person is tall," says George Ann Bellamy, "his countenance rather sportive than beautiful, and his manner agreeable. . . . He has infinite merit in comedy, and excels in mimicry." Garrick's description of him as a "d—d exotic" was probably very just. He never took root and acclimatized himself in any of the established theatrical organizations. He was cast by nature for the part of the Wandering Patentee.

It was in January, 1766, that he assumed the management of the York Theatre in partnership with a Mr. Baker, who, dying in 1770, left him monarch of the very important circuit which had York for its centre. He married in 1768 Miss Jane Doughty, the daughter of a milliner in York, by whom he had several children. In 1769 he expended £500 in procuring patents for the two theatres of York and Hull, which remained ever after his headquarters. He made occasional starring trips to Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, and even (in 1778) to London; but after 1788, when he had the misfortune to break his leg, he seldom appeared on the stage. It was during the idleness and ill-health resultant from this accident that he wrote the 'Memoirs of his own Life,' published at York in 1790 (4 vols.), and followed in 1795 by the 'Wandering Patentee' (also in 4 vols.). After a long period of ill-health he died on Aug. 26, 1803. He had given strict orders that the theatre was not to be closed on account of his death—orders which the trustees carried out by announcing that "*in consequence* of the death of Mr. Wilkinson" the

theatre would remain open on that and the two following evenings.

The general tendency of Tate Wilkinson's management was undoubtedly to raise the status of provincial actors. Though his own back was sufficiently supple when a royal or noble personage was in view (he relates with pride how the Duke of York after a "command" night honored him by remarking, "Very well indeed, Wilkinson! I shall command it again"); yet he fought with success against several of the groveling humiliations which custom imposed on the "poor player" in country towns. He sternly discountenanced, for example, the practice of actors and actresses personally hawking their benefit tickets from door to door. Again, when a country family of immense influence threatened to "boycott" him and his theatre unless he dismissed John Philip Kemble (not then the great actor he afterwards became), the manager replied curtly, "Mr. Wilkinson begs to say that he values Mr. Kemble more than all Mr. —'s family and connections put together." Though his own manner, especially when age and ill-health overtook him, was brusque to the point of violence, yet he was not unpopular with his subordinates as a whole, and with some a great favorite. The whole Kemble family, Mrs. Jordan, Miss Farren, Emery, Mathews, Suett, Knight, Liston and many other distinguished actors played under his management, more than one of them indeed, making their first step towards fame while in his company. We owe to the elder Mathews, to whom at the outset Wilkinson was extremely harsh and unjust, a most life-like and on the whole sympathetic account of him in his latter years. He never

could remember a proper name, and surpassed Rich himself in his perversions. When excited on several different matters at a time, he would mix them all up inextricably in long monologues, passing from Murphy's 'Life of Garrick' to some rats which had interfered with his sleep, from the rats to Mrs. Siddons as *Elvira* and from Mrs. Siddons to the drops he took for his rheumatism, until the hearer's brain reeled. When he was annoyed, he would take off his old wig and send it spinning across the room; on one occasion he actually flung it at the feet of an actress who was on the stage playing the *Queen* in 'Richard III.' He had a strange mania for buying rich costumes and insisting on their being worn on the stage, whether they were appropriate or not. One is led to conclude from the garbled shape in which quotations appear in his writings that he had little ear for verse; but on the other hand we find him insisting on careful pronunciation and rebuking an actor in 'Pizarro' who said, "Oh, godlike Roller! where's the man who would not foller Roller?" That he was a shrewd man of business is evident from the financial success he achieved; yet he was far from being miserly. Mathews calls him "one of the most generous of men, and *certainly* the most generous *manager* in the world;" and this eulogy he backs up by relating several instances of genuine liberality and thoughtfulness. On the whole we cannot part from Wilkinson without a certain feeling of respect. He was a dutiful son, an affectionate husband and father, a shrewd and honest man. He writes himself down a snob with an amusing frankness, but that is merely to say that he was a man of his time and of his profession. He speaks freely of the foibles of his contemporaries,

but without deliberate malice ; in treating of their artistic doings he is generally appreciative and sometimes enthusiastic. Mathews calls him "a polished gentleman in private life," and if we, to-day, are inclined to question the perfection of the polish, we may at least adapt old Adam's phrase and call him "crusty, yet kindly."

WILLIAM ARCHER.

One morning a letter was brought in at Southampton Street, introducing a young man who wished to go on the stage. Garrick received him kindly, listened to his declamation, which was poor enough, and comforted the aspirant by telling him that his shyness was a very good sign of success. This young fellow had hung about the greenroom in Covent Garden, and for all this shyness was a pert, forward, impudent *gamin*, whose precocious talents of mimicry had been overpraised by friends. He offered to "take off" some of the well-known actors, to show the manager his gifts. "Nay, now," said Garrick, in his peculiar mixture of hesitation and repetition, which made his "talk" a favorite subject of imitation. "Nay, now, sir, you must take care of this ; for I used to call myself the first at this business." But the young fellow knew the manager's weak place. He began, leading off with Foote. The likeness amused the manager immensely, and the performance was repeated. "Hey, now ! now—what—all," went on Mr. Garrick. "Now—really this—this—is—why, well, well, well, do call

on me on Monday, and you may depend on my doing all I can for you." On the Monday the youth came again, and was welcomed warmly. He was told that inquiries had been made about his widowed mother, and that he was to be put on the books at thirty shillings a week—a fortune indeed. The youth's name was Tate Wilkinson, who has left behind a very curious history of himself and other players, which is a mass of truth, blunders, and falsehoods—a mass, too, of meanness, vanity, and egotism ; so transparent that it becomes easy for the reader himself, to supply the true cause of various incidents which the author sets down. Of the dirty jealousies of the greenroom—of the tale bearing, the adulation, flattery and vanity of that curious kingdom, no such graphic or more disagreeable picture has been preserved.

PERCY FITZGERALD : 'Life of Garrick,' *vol. i., book iv., chap. i.*

When Foote first discovered Tate's ability he determined to make his introduction to the public a source of amusement to himself. Being advertised for a popular character, he rehearsed Wilkinson in it, not merely with the view of the latter's playing it instead, but in imitation of himself. This design was kept profoundly secret. At night the house was full ; Wilkinson was dressed ; and Foote retreated to his box to lie in ambush and watch the result. The great attraction was Foote, and expectation was in pangs for his appearance. Tate at length entered, and walked, talked, shuffled, snuffed, hitched and fidgeted so like the real Simon Pure, that the hoax completely succeeded ; and "Bravo, Foote ! what fine spirits Sam's in to-night !"

were the general exclamations. Foote at the same time experienced some enmity from the press, and the critics, as usual, lashed him for his performance; but on the same morning he divulged the joke, and at night led Wilkinson on the stage to introduce him to the public, saying, that "as they had received his Foote so favorably, he hoped they would now take him by the hand." Thus Tate rose immediately into notice, and Sam raised a laugh against his judges. One of the peculiarities of Tate's voice was its sweetness. On his first visit to Dublin with Foote, they were engaged by Barry and Mossop to give their entertainments on the alternate nights with Peg Woffington's performances. Foote considered that it would be an attractive feature in the bill, if he announced an imitation of the above lady by Wilkinson; but the design coming to her ears, she sent Sam an abusive note, acquainting him that if he attempted to take her off, she had some friends in Dublin who would oblige him to take himself off. Foote showed this epistle to his companion, who, nothing daunted, proposed that instead of an "imitation" they would give a scene from 'Alexander the Great' in character, Foote mimicking Barry in the hero, and Wilkinson, Mrs. W. as *Roxana*. Preparations were accordingly made, and their bills published:—what gave a greater zest to the announcement was, that 'Alexander the Great' had been played the night before. Among the flood of spectators came Peg in person, and seated herself in the stage box, not only to enlist the audience in her favor, and silence Foote by her appearance (which was truly beautiful), but if anything occurred to give the wink to a party of young Irish in the pit, who would rise up to execute

immediate vengeance on the mimics. Sam and Tate were thus treading on the surface of a secret mine.

When Foote appeared, as he could present no resemblance to Barry but in manner and accent, the surprise was necessarily transferred to the entrance of his companion, a tall and dignified female, something like the original in face, but so like in figure and deportment that the spectators glanced their eyes from box to stage and stage to box, to convince themselves of Mrs. W.'s identity. Peg herself was not the least astonished, and her myrmidons below were uncertain how to act.

Foote commenced the scene sufficiently like Barry to have procured applause, had not Tate thrown himself into one of Peg's favorite attitudes meanwhile, and diverted the attention. Eye and ear were now directed to the latter, and the first tone of his voice drew a thundering response from the lips of his auditors. As he proceeded the effect increased; the house was electrified; his enemies were overpowered, and Peg herself set the seal to his talents, by beating her fan to pieces on the beading of the boxes.

JOHN BERNARD: 'Retrospections of the Stage,' *vol. i., chap. 6.*

The next day I accidentally stepped into a milliner's shop, where a little elderly lady sat knitting in the corner, and without once looking at me on my entrance (or if she had she could *not* have known me), said: "Well, I am sure, Nanny, you shall never persuade me to go to the play again to see that hunch-backed Barber: give me the 'Mourning Bride' and Mr. Frodsham, and then there is some sense in it: but for

that man, that Wilkinson, as you call him, from London, pray let him go back and stay there, for he is the ugliest man I ever saw in my life, and so thought Jenny. I am sure if he was worth his weight in gold he should never marry a daughter of mine." . . . I turned round to her, and said, "Dear Madam, do not be so very hard-hearted, try the theatre once more when I *play*, and I will exert my best abilities to make you amends, and deserve your better sentiments." The old lady stared, down dropped the spectacles, the knitted garters followed (which had busily employed her attention while speaking), and without a single word took to her heels (which were nimble), and ran away out of the back door into New Street. . . . I must not forget to mention a very particular circumstance which was the cause of my having related the foregoing accident, and shows how strangely things occur. Know, then, reader, that in October, 1768 (only three years after Mrs. Doughty's unfavorable opinion of me), with that lady's own consent, I actually was married to her daughter Jane, and have this year, 1790, still the honor and happiness to call that truly good woman my wife.

TATE WILKINSON: 'Memoirs,' *vol. iv.*

Wilkinson was certainly one of the most eccentric men I ever met with; one of his whims was, to hide chocolate drops and other sweatmeats in different holes and corners of his house, his great pleasure consisting in finding them, as if by accident, some days after. When he had taken a few glasses of Old Madeira, of which he was very fond, he would mix his conversation about theatricals and eatables together

in a manner at once ludicrous and incomprehensible. I was sitting with him one night, in high spirits, after supper, and we spoke of Barry, the actor: "Sir," said he, "Barry, sir, was as much superior to Garrick in *Romeo*, as York Minster is to a Methodist chapel—not but I think, that if lobster sauce is not well made, a turbot isn't eatable, let it be ever so firm. Then there's that Miss Reynolds; why she, sir, fancies herself a singer, but she is quite a squalini, sir! a nuisance, sir! going about my house the whole of the day, roaring out 'The Soldier tired of War's Alarms,' ah! she has tired me and alarmed the whole neighborhood; not but when rabbits are young and tender, they are very nice eating. There was Mrs. Barry, for example; Mrs. Barry was very fine and very majestic in *Zenobia*; Barry, in the same play, was very good; not but that the wild rabbits are better than tame ones. Though Mrs. Barry was so great in her day, yet Mrs. Siddons—stewed and smothered with onions, either of them are delicious." Mrs. Pope was admirable in *Queen Elizabeth*—a man I had here, made a very good *Oroonoko*; not but I would always advise you to have a calf's head dressed with the skin on, but you must always bespeak it of the butcher yourself; though the last bespeak of Lord Scarborough did nothing for me, nothing at all—the house was one of the worst of the whole season; with bacon and green—not twenty pounds altogether, with parsley and butter;" and on he went talking, until he talked himself asleep, for which I did offer my thanks to Somnus, with all my soul; yet when clear of these unaccountable reveries, he was an amusing companion.

I have heard my friend King assert, that such was

the power of Wilkinson's mimicry, that ugly as he was, he could make his face resemble that of Mrs. Woffington, who was a beauty of her time. I once requested him to make Mrs. Woffington's face for me, which he good-naturedly did, and to my utter astonishment, really made a handsome one. He was very fond of talking of his Peg, as he called Mrs. Woffington, and avowed that, in his younger days, he was passionately in love with her.

MICHAEL KELLY : 'Reminiscences,' *vol. ii.*, pp. 10-12.

Wilkinson became ultimately the much-respected manager of the York company. He had, however, sundry peculiar habits. During his career as manager, if any member of his company had obstinately neglected to listen to his advice on any particular point of acting, he would mount, on some future night, into the gallery, and hiss him most strenuously—an expedient which presently brought the trifler to his senses. On one occasion, being more than usually indignant at some very slovenly exhibition on the stage, his hiss was remarkably audible. The object of his attack, however, seemed to have friends on the benches, for on a cry of "Turn him out!" poor Wilkinson was unceremoniously handed down from his own gallery and ejected into the street.

GEORGE RAYMOND : 'Life of Elliston,' *period i.*, *chap. i.*

Mr. Wilkinson was indeed a polished gentleman in private life ; and even as a manager his liberality was conspicuous. In the course of the year certain removes occurred, such as a nine-mile journey from

Pomfret to Wakefield, which many of the actors would walk, if the weather permitted, in summer. Tate, on such occasions, preceded them in his carriage; and on their arrival at a certain point of the road he would invite them to an excellent dinner, which he had ordered ready for their refreshment; and towards the whole of the performers, from the highest to the lowest, on these occasions, in manner and conduct he would be a Chesterfield in all he said and did. At the end of every unusually prosperous season also, the performers were sure to receive, on their last visit to the treasury, a present in addition to their salary, "With the manager's kind compliments."

MRS. MATHEWS: 'Life of Charles Mathews,' *vol. i., chap. 18*

He had in some measure been prepared for something extraordinary in Tate's manner, by his own letters, and had endeavored to make himself familiar with his character, by a careful perusal of the 'Wandering Patentee,' as this eccentric person styled himself in that entertaining work. The awe, however, felt by the aspirant at the idea of his first meeting with this celebrated man, and henceforth master of his fate, was in some measure relieved, if not removed, by his first glimpse of the figure before him, and its undignified occupation; neither of which realized any of Mr. Mathews's anticipations of the dignity of the old-school gentleman, or his preconceived notions of his consequence and superiority, and something approaching to self-possession was restored to him.

"Come in!"—the young man obeyed. Tate was shuffling about the room with a small ivory-handled

brush in one hand, and a silver buckle in the other, in pretended industry, whistling during his employment after the fashion of a groom while currying and rubbing down a horse.* It was a minute at least before Tate took the least notice of the new-comer, who, in the short interval had opportunity to observe the ludicrous effect of Tate's appearance, which was indeed irresistibly droll. He was still in his morning's dishabille, which did not consist of the usual undress of men of his standing, who generally indulged in a copious *robe de chambre*, easy slippers, and the Dilworth cap, to relieve the formality and confinement of a wig. Tate's early dress did not differ from the later one in which he appeared after the busy part of his day was finished. But "he wore his rue with a difference," that is, at this period, his coat collar was thrown back upon his shoulders, and his Brown George (a wig so called in compliment, I believe, to King George the Third, who set the fashion,) on one side, exposing the ear on the other, and cocked up behind so as to leave the bare nape of his neck open to observation. His hat was put on *side* foremost, and as forward and awry as his wig; both were perked on his head very insecurely, as it seemed to the observer. He presented altogether what might be called an *uncomfortable* appearance, and which to those who were in the habit of seeing him at other times, might be supposed to be contrived as a striking contrast to his precise

* It appeared it was his custom daily to polish his own buckles; for as these particular buckles (small silver shoe-buckles) were especial favorites, from having been the gift of his friend, the immortal Garrick, and were worn constantly in his dress shoes, he was chary of allowing others the privilege of touching them; in fact he never trusted them out of his own hands.

and *smug* effect after he had made his toilette, when he was particularly neat.

When the young actor entered, he caught the back view of this strange figure, which made no movement either of courtesy or curiosity. Mr. Mathews, after an unsuccessful cough, and a few significant *hems*, which seemed to solicit welcome and attention, ventured at last upon an audible "Good morning, sir." This had its effect, and the following colloquy ensued : "Good morning, sir," said Mr. Mathews,— "Oh ! good morning, Mr. Meadows," replied Tate very doggedly,—" My name is Mathews, sir,"—" Ay, I know," wheeling suddenly round, and looking at him for the first time with scrutinizing earnestness from head to foot. Winking his eyes and lifting his brows rapidly up and down, a habit with him when not pleased, he uttered a long drawn "U—gh !" and exclaimed, "What a may-pole !—Sir, you're too *tall* for low comedy."—"I'm sorry, sir," said the poor disconcerted youth ; but Tate did not seem to hear him, for dropping his eyes and resuming the brushing of his buckles, he continued as if in soliloquy : "But I don't know why a tall man shouldn't be a very comical fellow." Then again turning sharply for a reinvestigation of the slender figure before him, he added with gathering discontent, "You're too *thin*, sir, for anything but the *Apothecary* in 'Romeo and Juliet ;' and you would want stuffing for *that*"—"I am *very* sorry, sir," rejoined the mortified actor, who was immediately interrupted by the growing distaste and manifest ill humor of the disappointed manager.

"What's the use of being *sorry*? You speak too *quick*." The accused anxiously assured him that he

would endeavor to mend that habit. "What," said Tate snappishly, "by speaking *quicker*, I suppose." Then, looking at Mr. Mathews, he, as if again in soliloquy, added, "I never saw anybody so thin to be *alive*!! Why, sir, one hiss would blow you off the stage." This remark sounding more like good humor than anything he had uttered, the comedian ventured, with a faint smile, to observe, that he *hoped he should not get that one*—when Tate with affected or real anger, replied, "You'll get a great many, sir. Why, sir, *I've* been hissed ;—the great Mr. Garrick has been hissed ; it's not very modest in *you* to expect to escape, Mr. Mountain."—"Mathews, sir, interposed the miscalled. "Well, Mathew Mountain."—"No, sir—"—"Have you a quick study, Mr. Maddox?" asked Tate interrupting him once more. Mathews gave up the ineffectual attempt to preserve his proper name, and replied at once to the last question, "I *hope* so, sir." "Why" (in a voice of thunder) "arn't you *sure*?" "Ye-e-es, sir," asserted his terrified and harrassed victim. Tate shuffled up and down the room, whistling and brushing rapidly, looking from time time with evident dissatisfaction, if not disgust, at the object of his scrutiny ; and, after several of these furtive glances, he suddenly desisted from his occupation, and once more stopped abruptly before him.

It must be understood, that in Tate's first surprise he had neglected to offer his visitor a seat ; therefore Mr. Mathews had remained standing near the door, relieving his weariness, after a long journey, by alternately shifting his position, like a pupil taking his first lesson from a dancing-master ; and leaning sometimes upon one foot and then upon the other, in awkward

embarrassment. Tate, as I have observed, stopped and inquired if he was a single man? Of course, he replied in the negative. "I'm sorry for it, Mr. Montague; a wife's a dead weight without a salary, and I don't choose my actors to run in debt."—"I hope you will have no cause to complain of me in that respect, sir." Tate was again busy with his buckle; an obstinate tarnish, "a damned spot," called for his most vehement exertion; yet he spared a look or two at his visitor's face. At last, he seemed to have collected all his moral force, and after another pause, he demanded, "Pray, when did you have that paralytic stroke, Mr. Maddox?" "I—I never had one at all, sir," said the now completely mortified youth, with difficulty restraining the tears which were making their way to his eyes; when Tate giving him another earnest look, as if unconsciously drawing his own mouth awry in imitation of the one which had suggested the last question, answered dryly and significantly, in Mr. Mathews's tone of voice, as he turned away, "Oh! I thought you *had!*"

All this was inauspicious; and, after the interview had lasted a few minutes longer, Tate strongly recommending the young man's return to his father, and an "honest trade," as he said, all that could be gained by Mr. Mathews was the manager's slow leave to let him enter upon his probation, and at least have a trial before final condemnation. Thus dispirited, he returned to his anxious wife, with the saddest impressions and anticipations. However, after a few days, his morning observations of the play-bills were cheered by the sight of his own name—*really* his name. *Mr. Mathews, from the Theatre Royal, Dublin,* (for Tate

would not own a "man from the mountains,") was announced to appear in the character of *Silky*, in the 'Road to Ruin,' and *Lingo*, in the 'Agreeable Surprise.'

Ibid., vol. i., chap. 11.

LEWIS HALLAM.

1736-40-1808.

To this New World, from famed Britannia's shore,
Through boist'rous seas where foaming billows roar,
The Muse, who Britons charm'd for many an age,
Now sends her servants forth to tread your stage ;
Britain's own race, though far removed, to shew
Patterns of every virtue they should know.

* * * * *

The Muse's friends, we hope, will join our cause,
And crown our best endeavors with applause.

JOHN SINGLETON : Prologue spoken at the first performance of Hallam's Company of Comedians in America, at Williamsburg, Va., Sept. 5, 1752.

LEWIS HALLAM, THE SECOND.

Lewis Hallam, the second, is fairly entitled to be remembered for his ability and versatility, and yet more on account of the unique place that he fills in the history of the American theatre. He was the first star ever known to American play-goers, and the first leading actor whose *début* and early experience were American ; he was the foremost actor in America for fifteen years or more before the Revolution, and he was the first dramatic manager in New York after the Independence of the United States had been established by the Revolution. It has long been the fashion to account the company of actors brought over by the first Lewis Hallam in 1752 the pioneers of the dramatic art, and if one may trust Dunlap, the second Lewis Hallam himself held vaguely to this notion, though both he and Dunlap knew that a troupe of indifferent actors was playing at the time of their arrival. But I find almost conclusive proof that a company of some sort was performing in New York as early as 1739, thirteen years before the Hallams came, and it is known that something called a Play-house existed there six years earlier even than this date, namely, in 1733. It is probable that the play given at Williamsburg, Va., in 1718, in honor of George I.'s birthday, was performed by amateurs ; but Charleston, S. C., had a theatre as early as 1736. The

beginnings of the colonial stage are thus lost in obscurity, but when William Hallam, of the Goodman's Fields Theatre, sent his brother, the first Lewis, to New York, he no doubt despatched the first reputable company ever seen on the American continent. Certain it is that the make-shift companies, like Murray and Kean's, which wandered from town to town before the arrival of the American Company, vanished utterly after the coming of the Hallams.

Lewis Hallam, the second, was the son of Lewis Hallam, who was the first manager of the American company. Lewis Hallam, the first, appears to have been a good low comedian ; his wife, the mother of the second Lewis, possessed considerable histrionic ability. The son, who was the ablest of his line, was, according to Dunlap, but twelve years of age when the company arrived at Williamsburg, in Virginia, in 1752, but if the age assigned to him by the newspapers at his death is correctly given, he must have been sixteen when he landed in America ; whether twelve or sixteen years old, Lewis Hallam made his *début* at Williamsburg on the opening night in America of the American company. The play was the 'Merchant of Venice,' and Lewis was cast for the part of *Portia's* servant. He had but a single line to speak, and even on this he broke down, running off the stage in tears. But he early rose to the chief place among American players. Two of the critics of the time agree that his elocution was not equal to his acting ; one of them accuses him of mouthing and ranting, but acknowledges that he was "thorough master of all the tricks of the trade." His range was very wide, and his versatility great. Josiah Quincy, who strongly deprecated

the influence of the theatre, could not resist the charm of his acting; he ascribes to Hallam merit in every character he assumed. Pioneer in so many other regards, it is supposed that as *Mungo* in the 'Padlock,' Hallam was also the first delineator of negro character from observation. Many of the negroes of that time spoke English but very brokenly, and the character must have given Hallam opportunity for broad effects.

Like Douglass, his step-father and predecessor, in management, Hallam was obliged to resort to queer devices in order to evade regulations made to prevent the performance of plays. When he opened in New York in 1785, the first theatre in the United States, the entertainment was announced as a course of lectures by Mr. Hallam, to begin with a prologue and end with a pantomime. Both before and after the Revolution the American Company acted by turns in all the principal towns on the continent, except those from which they were excluded by law.

Lewis Hallam, the second, retired from management in 1797, but continued to play in various places in America, until his death in Philadelphia in 1808, at seventy-two years of age,—or, if Dunlap be correct, at sixty-eight. His remarkable career on the American stage thus stretches over a period of fifty-six years.

EDWARD EGGLESTON.

In 1752, when the English theatre, led by Garrick, was in the most brilliant period of its history, William Hallam, of the Goodman's Fields theatre, sent to America his brother, Lewis Hallam [the elder], at the head of a company of actors, twelve in all, who were to open their colonial career at Williamsburg. The Hallams probably chose the capital of Virginia because the inhabitants of that colony were known to be rich, leisurely, and society-loving people, with enough of refinement to enjoy plays, and with few religious scruples against anything that tended to make life pleasant to the upper classes. Long before this period, and long afterward, the reading aloud of plays, romances, and operas was a pastime in Virginia country houses on rainy days, Sunday afternoons, and when no fiddler could be had in the evening.

Twenty-four plays have been selected and cast before Lewis Hallam and his company left London on the *Charming Sally*, no doubt a tobacco-ship returning light for a cargo. On her unsteady deck, day after day, during the long voyage, the actors diligently rehearsed the plays with which they proposed to cheer the hearts of people in the New World. Williamsburg must have proved a disappointment to them. There were not more than a thousand people, white and black, in the village. The buildings, except the capitol, the college, and the so-called "palace" of the governor, were insignificant, and there were only about a dozen "gentlemen's" families resident in the place. In the outskirts of the town a warehouse was fitted up for a theatre. The woods were all about it, and the actors could shoot squirrels from the windows. When

the time arrived for the opening of the theatre, the company were much disheartened. It seemed during the long still hours of the day that they had come on a fool's errand to act dramas in the woods. But as evening drew on, the whole scene changed like a work of magic. The roads leading into Williamsburg were thronged with out-of-date vehicles of every sort, driven by negroes and filled with gayly dressed ladies, whose gallants rode on horseback alongside. The treasury was replenished, the theatre was crowded, and Shakspeare was acted on the continent probably for the first time by a trained and competent company. The 'Merchant of Venice' and Garrick's farce of 'Lethe' were played; and at the close the actors found themselves surrounded by groups of planters congratulating them, and after the Virginia fashion offering them the hospitality of their houses.

The seats were classified into boxes, pit, and gallery. Some of the boxes were placed in such proximity to the stage as to be virtually a part of it. The boxes could only be entered from the stage, and seats were sometimes sold on the stage itself. Gentlemen made free to go behind the scenes, and to loiter in full view on the stage, showing their gallantry by disturbing attentions to the actresses. Managers were ever publishing notices that no one would be admitted behind the scenes, and were ever allowing their rule to be broken by those whose position in society entitled them to do lawless things without rebuke. Smoking was allowed in the theatre, and liquors were served to people in the pit.

EDWARD EGGLESTON, in the *Century Magazine*, July, 1886.

It will be observed by the above bill that the first night of performing in America was the first night of appearance on any stage of Lewis Hallam, the second. He had one line to speak, but when he found himself in the presence of the audience he was panic struck. He stood motionless and speechless, until bursting into tears, he walked off the stage, making a most inglorious exit.

WILLIAM DUNLAP: 'History of the American Theatre,' *vol. i., chap. 2.*

On June 19 [1769] the theatre [John Street, New York,] closed with the play of 'Love for Love,' and for the sixth time the 'Padlock.' Mr. Hallam . . . was now the principal comedian and tragedian of the company. He ascribed his success to the instructions of Rigby, who was the first male player of the original band. In the 'Padlock,' Mr. Hallam was unrivalled to his death, giving the *Mungo* with a truth derived from study of the negro slave character, which Dibdin, the writer, could not have conceived.

Ibid., chap. 3.

The first alone [Hallam] possessing the skill of an artist in his profession. He was in this short campaign [1785] the hero of tragedy and comedy, the low comedian of farce, and the harlequin of pantomime.

Ibid., chap. 5.

Of the merits of Mr. Hallam we have repeatedly spoken. In person he was of middle stature or above,

thin, straight, and well taught as a dancer and fencer. In learning the latter accomplishment he had received a hurt in the corner of one of his eyes, which gave a slight cast, scarcely perceptible, but odd expression to it in some points of view ; generally his face was well adapted to his profession, particularly in comedy.

Ibid., chap. 7.

Went to the play-house in the evening ; saw the 'Gamester' and 'Padlock' performed. The players made an indifferent figure in tragedy. They make a much better in comedy. Hallam has merit in every character he acts. . . . I was, however, much gratified upon the whole ; and I believe, if I had staid in town [New York] a month I should go to the theatre every acting night. But as a citizen and friend to the morals and happiness of society, I should strive hard against the admission, and much more the establishment of a play-house in any state of which I was a member.

JOSEPH QUINCY : 'Journal,' May 11, 1773.

This gentleman was long at the head of the old profession, but my recollections of him are not favorable. His manner was of that peculiar kind, that in my youth I always heard called "the Old School," and which Garrick effectually exploded. In tragedy he "spouted," by which I mean declaimed without passion. In comedy, such parts, for example, as *Mercutio*, *Goldfinch*, etc., Mr. Hallam always struck me as extravagant ; and a constant habit of interlarding the text with small oaths was charged against his taste from an early period. I should hesitate thus to present my opinions in regard to an actor whose name is

in some degree historical, did I not know that they were invariably sustained by persons of acknowledged judgment.

WM. B. WOOD: 'Personal Recollections of the Stage,' *chap.* 6.

JOHN HENDERSON.

1747—1785.

In the drama's wide circle, he roved unconfined,
To embellish, with truth, an original mind ;
His compeers from him all their dignity won,
As erratic orbs gather light from the sun,
When he moved in the firmament, journeying his
way,
The satellites followed to blaze with his ray.
Can we wonder the stage should be dark in these
days,
When that sun we lament has withdrawn with those
rays ?

JOHN WILLIAMS (Anthony Pasquin) : the 'Children
of Thespis,' (*Ed.* 1792).



JOHN HENDERSON
As Count Biron in "Isabella."

1

JOHN HENDERSON.

John Henderson, born in 1747, and dying in 1785, distinguished by striking success in such different parts as *Hamlet* and *Falstaff*, was descended in the direct line from Dr. Alexander Henderson, known to history by his conference with Charles I. in the Isle of Wight. His father was an Irish pastor, who died one year after John Henderson's birth. The boy went with his mother to Newport Pagnel, in Buckinghamshire, and afterwards to a school at Hemel Hempstead. Then moving to London he did very well as a pupil in drawing to one Fournier, a person of talent but of no distinction, whom he soon left, joining a relation, Mr. Cripp, a notable silversmith in St. James's Street with an idea of going into the business. He had, however, a passion for the stage, and in 1768 he gave a taste of his quality to George Garrick, who at once pronounced him hopeless on account of a feeble voice. Then he got an introduction to David Garrick, which, however, led to nothing. In 1776 he made an attempt, which failed, to get an engagement at the Haymarket. Finally, Garrick heard him, and partly endorsing his brother's opinion as to his voice, gave him nevertheless an introduction to Palmer, manager of the Bath company, who engaged him at a guinea a week. Under the name of Courtney he appeared as *Hamlet* (Oct. 6, 1772), with complete success. He soon took his own

name, and during the season played *Richard III.*, *Benedick*, *Macbeth*, *Bobadil*, *Bayes*, *Don Felix*, *Essex*, *Hotspur*, *Fribble*, *Lear*, *Hastings*, *Alonzo*, and *Alzuma*. In the autumn season he added to these characters, among others, *Pierre*, *Don John*, *Sir John Brute*, *Othello*, *Ranger*, and *Zanga*. He now wished for a London engagement, but Garrick, from mixed motives probably, would have nothing to say to him. In 1777 Colman, who had just taken the little theatre in the Haymarket, engaged him and brought him out as *Shylock*. This was followed by *Lear*, *Richard III.*, *Don John*, *Bayes*, and the two *Falstaffs*. The success was brilliant, and before the winter Sheridan engaged him for Drury Lane. In 1774 he married and went to Covent Garden for the winter season. His last appearance was Nov. 3, 1785, as *Horatius* in the 'Roman Father.' His death followed soon on this. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Macready in his 'Reminiscences' thus reports the judgment of his father, who was peculiarly well qualified to pass judgment on Henderson. "Among players his models of excellence in their particular walks were Macklin and Henderson, the theatrical Titans to whose remote grandeur he looked back with confident veneration. . . . He had acted the part of *Horatio* in the Dublin Theatre three times in one week with three different *Hamlets*—Holman, Kemble, and Henderson—and with all the personal advantages of the two former he regarded Henderson as immeasurably their superior." A criticism in one of the papers of the day distinguished the three: Holman, as *Hamlet*; Kemble, Prince *Hamlet*; and Henderson, *Hamlet* Prince of Denmark. "His career," Macready resumes, "was short,

but from the testimony of those who witnessed his performances he must have been a worthy successor of Garrick, and indisputably pre-eminent in the characters of *Hamlet*, *Iago*, *Falstaff*, *Shylock*, *Benedick*, etc."

This is a striking testimony, and the etc., is significant.

George Colman refers to certain mannerisms which Henderson had—what great actor has been free from them?—and refers also to certain deficiencies in Henderson's figure; but adds that the actor's talent soon made sufficient way to battle such ill-natured remarks as might have been expected on symmetry, such as indeed that the actor was accepted without demur for heroic and lover-like characters. It is perhaps not amiss that audiences nowadays are less touchy upon the question of "symmetry."

Boaden speaks of him in the highest terms and gives most special praise to his perception, working out and expression of characters of diverse kinds. So Mrs. Siddons says that without great personal advantages he was "the soul of life and feeling." So far as I can judge he had by force of genius and discretion arrived at the true mingling of passion and art. He was not what is technically and somewhat stupidly called a character-actor, but he regarded every part as a distinct character to be interpreted with knowledge and study of human nature, and hence came his singular versatility. *Falstaff* is a character-part, but is also a gentleman. *Hamlet* is a gentleman, but is also, as indeed all true parts are, a character-part in the true sense. His equal success in these two is an index to Henderson's treatment of a wide range of parts. That neither Garrick nor Foote could praise him

need not disturb one's conviction of his being a truly great actor. Foote was apt to be jealous of everybody, and Garrick was certainly jealous of Henderson.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

John Henderson, as an actor, had many disadvantages to cope with ; his height was below the common standard ; his limbs were ill-proportioned, they were too short ; he had not much of that flexibility of countenance, which anticipates the tongue ; that language of the eye, which prepares the spectator for the coming sentence, enchains attention, and ensures partiality ; his voice wanted the silver tones which charm the ear, and was deficient in that dignified strength which commands respect ; it was not suited to the softness of love, or the rage of tyranny—but the solidity of his judgment and the fervency of his mind broke through all the mounds which nature seemed to have placed between him and excellence ; his comprehension was ample, his knowledge diversified, and his elocution accurate—when sensible recitation was the leading feature of a character he had no superior—in the variety of Shakspeare's soliloquies where more is meant than meets the ear he had no equal.

P. GENEST : 'History of the Stage,' *vol. vi.*, pp. 403-4.

Henderson had many difficulties to conquer before he could bring *Falstaff* within his grapple : neither in person, voice, nor countenance did he seem qualified

for the part. By the assistance of a most excellent judgment he has contrived to supply all deficiencies. In the impudent dignity, if I may be allowed the expression of the character, Quin greatly excelled all competitors. In the frolicsome, gay, and humorous situations of *Falstaff*, Henderson is superior to every man.

THOMAS DAVIES: 'Dramatic Miscellanies,' vol. i., chap. 12.

Mr. Henderson's *Leonatus Posthumus* in 'Cymbeline,' *Horatius* in the 'Roman Father,' and *Sir Giles Overreach* in a 'New Way to Pay Old Debts,' are remembered as being perfection, and his *Falstaff* is the only *Falstaff* worth remembering, Cooke's being professedly a copy of it.

WILLIAM DUNLAP: 'History of the American Theatre,' vol. i., chap. 16.

Henderson was the *Jaques*, and he was in everything the best performer on the stage at that time in all the higher branches of the drama, Lewis alone excepted Of Mr. Henderson, I will only remark that his *Hamlet* was then the best in London, though I doubt not that Mr. Kemble's surpassed it in after years.

Ibid., vol. i., chap. 21.

Henderson was a truly great actor; his *Hamlet* and his *Falstaff* were truly good. He was a very fine reader too; in his comic readings superior, of course, to Mrs. Siddons: his *John Gilpin* was marvellous.

'Recollections of the Table Talk of Samuel Rogers.'

Henderson's face and person were not fitted for tragedy, but he was an excellent comedian; and though his *Falstaff* was the most facetious I ever saw, yet it always struck me that it was a mixture of the old woman with the old man. He laughed and chuckled almost throughout the character, and his laugh, like that of Mrs. Jordan, spread a merry contagion, which might be said to infect the whole audience. His *Benedick* was so close an imitation of Garrick, that my dear mother, who was an excellent judge, when we saw it together, one night observed, that if it were not for the difference in person, she might have thought Garrick was performing. He was a good *Shylock*, and was the first who differently pointed the following passage :

Signor Antonio, many a time and oft on the Rialto.

"Many a time and oft," was generally considered as a common proverbial expression, but Henderson pointed it thus :

Signor Antonio many a time, and oft on *the Rialto*,

implying that *Antonio* had not only generally "bated" him, but oft even on the Rialto, "where merchants most do congregate." Whatever the critics may decide on this alteration, it certainly is ingenious, and shows that Henderson was disposed to think for himself.

JOHN TAYLOR: 'Records of My Life,' *vol. i., chap. 31.*

Henderson's *Iago* was a masterly piece of acting throughout. He admirably mingled the subtlety of the character with its reputed blunt honesty. His manner of varying his advice to *Roderigo*, "to put

money in his purse," was remarkably ingenious; and so was his manner of reciting the verses which he composes by desire of *Desdemona*. In general, till Henderson's time, performers used to deliver those verses as if they had "got them by heart," to use the common expression, but Henderson spoke them gradually, as if he was inventing them by degrees.

Ibid., vol. i., chap. 31.

With these adventitious faults, he had to contend against physical drawbacks;—his eye wanted expression, and his figure was not well put together:—my father was anxious to start him in characters whose dress might either help or completely hide personal deficiencies;—accordingly it was arranged that the two first personations should be *Shylock* and *Hamlet*, in which the Jew's gaberdine and the Prince of Denmark's "inky cloak" and "suit of solemn black," were of great service.—I know not whether *Falstaff* immediately followed these; but whenever he *did* come, *Sir John's* proportions were not expected to present a model for the students of the Royal Academy.—By this management the actor's talents soon made sufficient way to battle such ill-natured remarks as might have been expected upon symmetry; and the audience was prepared to admit, when he came to the lovers and heroes, that

Before such merit all objections fly.

I do not mean, by what I have said, to cry up Henderson beyond his deserts, but to protest against running him down;—he was many degrees below the

standard of Garrick's theatrical genius, and many degrees above the mark of his critical detraction.

GEORGE COLMAN, the younger : 'Random Records,' *vol. i., chap. 7.*

I have been at another new play, the 'Roman Sacrifice.' It is the old story of Junius Brutus without a tolerable line. I went to see it as I had never seen Henderson, and thought I could judge him better in a new part ; but either the part was so bad or he wants to copy that I should not have found out he was at all superior to all the other actors.

HORACE WALPOLE : 'Letters,' *vol. vii.,* To the Countess of Ossory, Dec. 23, 1777.

Professor Dugald Stewart, who knew Henderson, told me that his power of memory was the most astonishing he had ever met with. In the philosopher's presence he took up a newspaper, and, after reading it over, repeated such a portion of it as to Mr. Stewart seemed utterly marvelous. When he had expressed his surprise, Henderson modestly replied : "If you had been obliged like me to depend during so many years for your daily bread on getting words by heart, you would not be so astonished at habit having produced this facility."

THOMAS CAMPBELL : 'Life of Mrs. Siddons,' *vol. i., chap. 2.*

He loved praise, honestly owned his love, and worked hard to win public favor. When he was cast for a new character, he read the entire play, learned

his own part, read the play again, and troubled himself no more about it, although a fortnight might elapse between the last rehearsal and the first performance. Previous to which latter occasion, it was his custom to dine well, and sit at his wine till summoned to rise and go forth. A Garrick-worshiper told him he was wrong. Mr. Garrick on such occasions shut himself up for the day, and dined lightly. Henderson was the last of the school of Garrick, and once imitated his master in his diet. The result was a cold and rapid performance of *Bireno*, in the 'Law of Lombardy,' and Henderson registered a vow to be original and dine generously on like occasions in future. Henderson was in every respect, a gentleman; his social position was as good as that of any gentleman of his time. In Dublin as in London he was a welcome guest in the best society, even in that for which the stage had few attractions. Personally he had natural obstacles to surmount. He was short, not gracefully moulded, lacked intelligent expression of the eye, and had a voice too weak for rage, and not silvery enough for love. But he had clear judgment, quick feeling, ready comprehension, and accurate elocution.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the English Stage,' vol. ii., chap. 17.

He also gave recitations at Freemason's Hall with Thomas Sheridan; I went to hear them, and was very much pleased. Henderson's chief source of humor was reciting Cowper's Johnny Gilpin; and Sheridan's tools were Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' and 'Alexander's Feast.' I also heard Henderson's powerful mimicry in a private company at Cork. Among

other laughables, he gave us an interview between himself and a theatrical manager: the subject was the manager teaching him, the actor, how to perform *Shylock*. "This *Shylock*," said he, "that is, Shakspeare's *Shylock*, though he is a Jew,—he's a Jew that walks the Rialto at Venice, and talks to the magnificos; and you must not by any means act such a Jew as if he was one of the Jews that sell old clothes, and slippers, and oranges, and sealing-wax, up and down Pall Mall." In this piece of humor Henderson had the manager's voice and manner perfectly correct, and it gave a great deal of harmless amusement.

JOHN O'KEEFE: 'Recollections,' vol. i., chap. 9.

Henderson was playing at Bath on a guinea a week, and about the year 1776 went to Drury Lane, I suppose at a very high salary, for he well deserved it. Though the memory of Garrick was then so recent, yet Henderson completely succeeded in his most remarkable characters, particularly in *Benedick*, in 'Much Ado,' and *Don John* in the 'Chances.' I saw him with great pleasure in both, as also in *Falstaff*: he had a great deal of Garrick in his manner, and his figure was not very much unlike, only rather taller: his limbs neat, and his face round and pleasing; his manner lively, smart, and perfectly full to the comprehension of his audience. His *Falstaff* was the most attractive of any of his characters. Some time after this I was very well acquainted with him in Cork, and found him a pleasing, cheerful companion. His great forte in a room was reciting some of Prior's and Parnell's Tales, which he did capitally, and likewise a dialogue between a nobleman and Garrick—the Irish

peer recommending Mossop, his college fellow-student to Garrick, by every argument of praise as to voice, and action, and literary attainments ; which Garrick, with great art acquiesced in, but slyly threw out some keen stroke against Mossop's qualifications, which was immediately taken up by the noble advocate, who went far beyond Garrick in his censures, as thus :—

Nobleman.—Now, Mr. Garrick, Mossop's voice—what a fine voice, so clear, full, and sublime for tragedy.

Garrick.—Oh ! yes, my Lord ; Mossop's voice is indeed, very good—and full—and—and—But—my Lord, don't you think that *sometimes* he is rather too loud ?

Nobleman.—Loud ? Very true, Mr. Garrick,—too loud,—too sonorous !—when we were in College together, he used to plague us with a spout and a rant and a bellow. Why we used to call him "*Mossop the Bull !*"—But then, Mr. Garrick, you know, his step !—so very firm and majestic—treads the boards so charmingly !

Garrick.—True, my lord : you have hit his manner very well indeed, very charming ! But do you not think his step is sometimes rather *too* firm ?—somewhat of a—a stamp ; I mean a gentle stamp, my lord ?

Nobleman.—Gentle ! call you it, Mr. Garrick ? not at all !—at College we called him "*Mossop the Pavior !*"—But his action—his action is so very expressive.

Garrick.—Yes, my lord, I grant, indeed, his action is very fine,—fine—very fine : he acted with me originally in 'Barbarossa,' when I was the *Achmet* ; and his action was—a—a—to be sure *Barbarossa* is a

great tyrant—but then, Mossop, sticking his left hand on his hip, a-kimbo, and his right hand stretching out—thus! You will admit that sort of action was not so very graceful.

Nobleman.—Graceful, Mr. Garrick! Oh, no! by no means—not at all—everything the contrary—His one arm a-kimbo, and his other stretched out!—very true—why, at College, we used to call him, "*Mossop the Teapot!*"
Ibid.

His readings were attended frequently by Mrs. Siddons and John Kemble; his voice was so flexible that his tones conveyed every phase of meaning. Even his way of reading the words: "They order this matter, said I, better in France," had a world of significance in it, not to be found when uttered by others; and the letter of *Mrs. Ford to Falstaff*, when he read it on the stage, shook the house with such laughter as was seldom heard, save indeed when he imitated Garrick and Dr. Johnson, the former reciting his ode, and the latter interrupting him by critical objections. I do not wonder that both Munden and John Kemble, who, all their lives, had a longing to play *Falstaff*, abandoned the idea when they remembered Henderson's excellence.

DR. DORAN: 'Annals of the Stage,' vol. ii., chap. 17.

When Kemble first appeared in 'Hamlet,' the town could not say that Henderson was excelled, but many confessed that he was equalled. That confession stirred no ill-blood between them. "I never had an opportunity," said Kemble later, "to study any actor better than myself, except Mr. Henderson."

Ibid., vol. ii., chap. 19.

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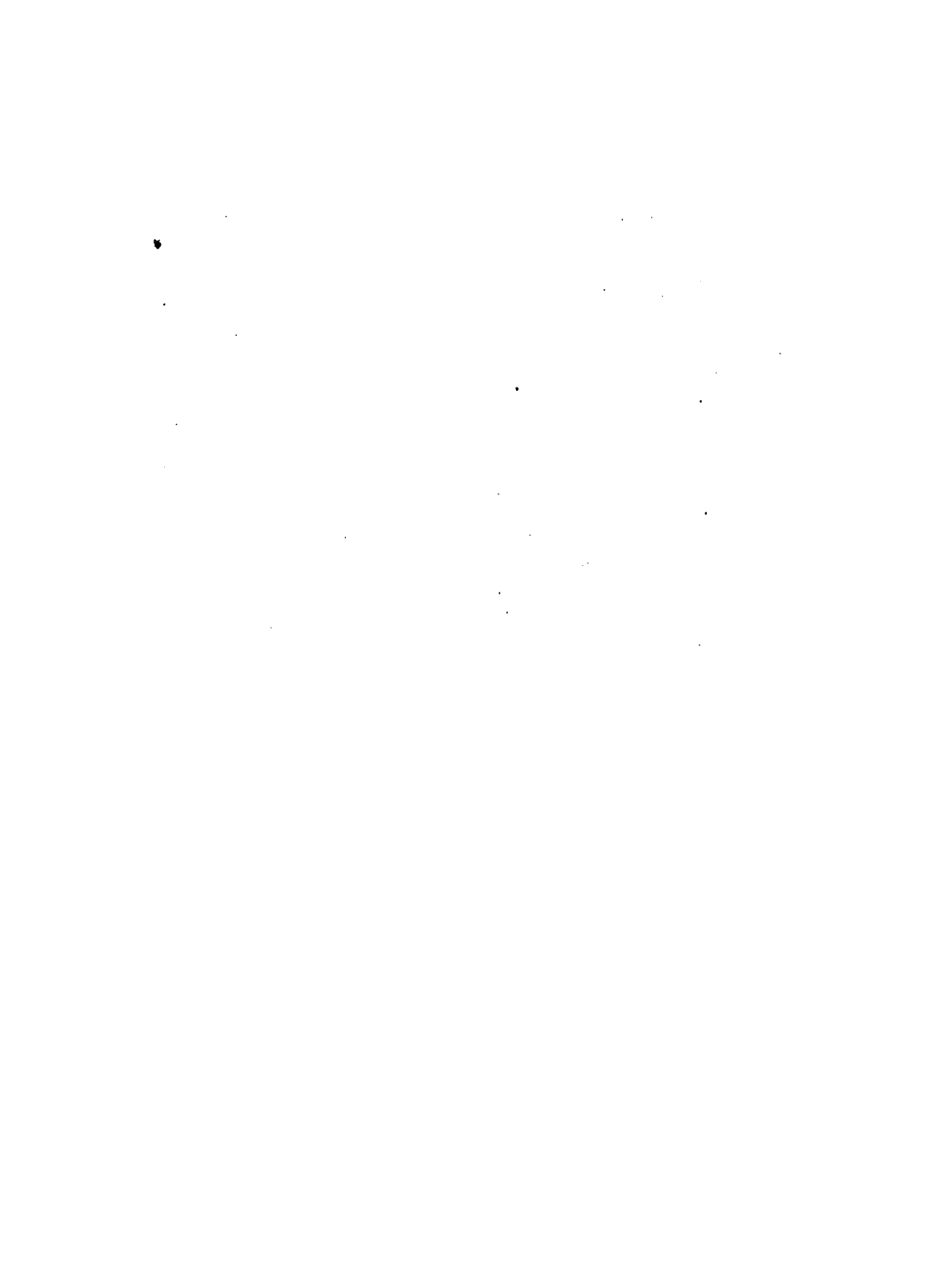
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